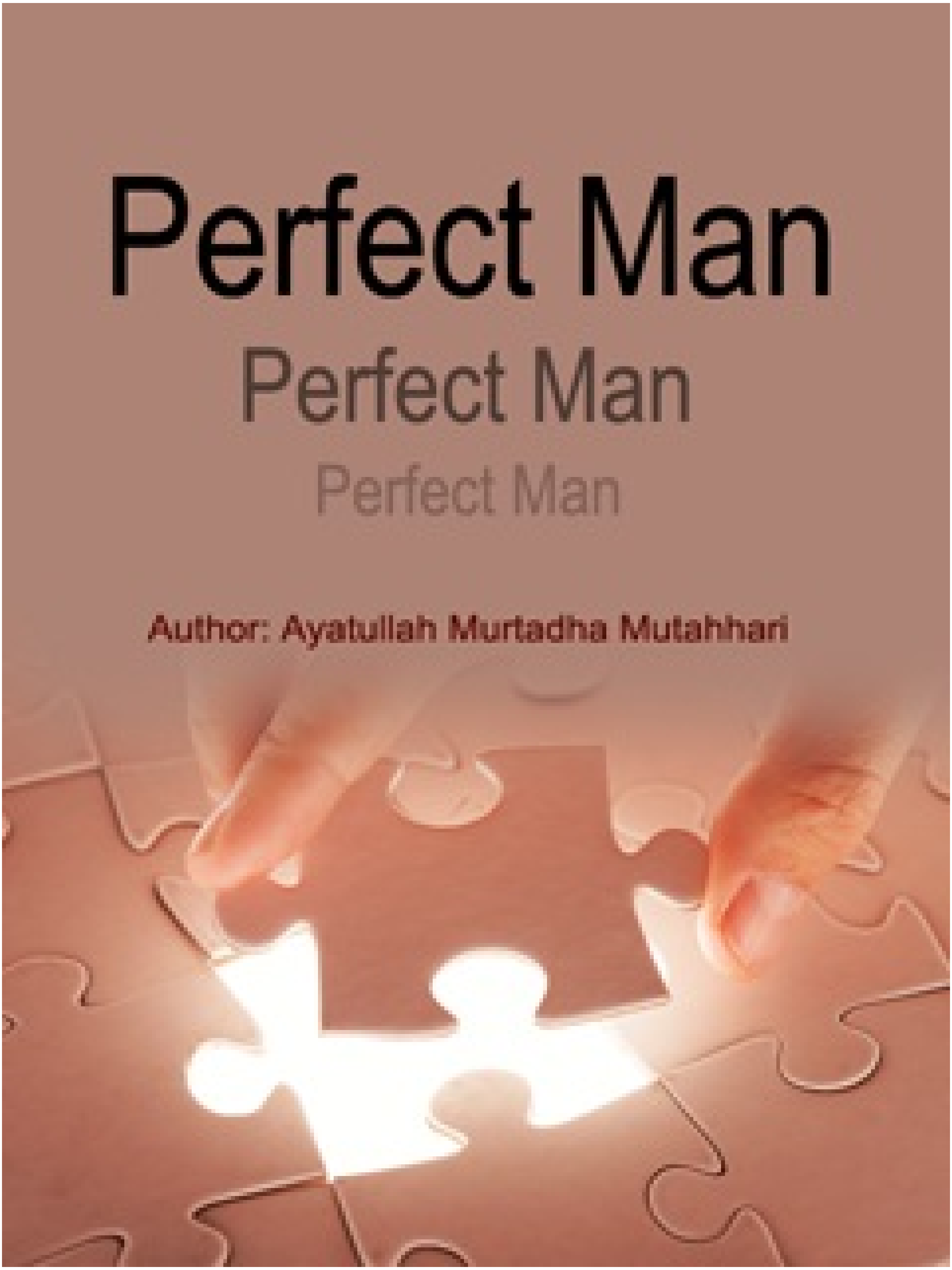

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point

What makes a man perfect? This text discusses the spiritual reality of man, and the .relationship of man with nature

Category: Philosophy Spirituality

Topic Tags: Mysticism Philosophy Spiritual Journey Miscellaneous information:nbsp; (Edited by Shah Tariq Kamal)Important notice:nbsp;The Ahlul Bayt DILP team wishes to inform the reader of some important points regarding this digitized text, which represents the English translation of a work originally written in Farsi. Whereas no one can doubt the best intentions of the translator and the publishers in making this title accessible to an English speaking audience, the editing and digitization process of this book (carried out by the DILP Team) has revealed issues in the quality of .translation

Based upon this fact, the DILP team has taken the liberty to make grammatical corrections to make the text more readable and less ambiguous; spelling mistakes and typographical errors have also been corrected and an attempt has been made to improve the highly non-standard use of transliteration of Arabic names and terms. .The online text is not an exact reproduction of the original translation

Users wishing to see the translation as it was published should refer to printed copies

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The Ahlul Bayt DILP Team

Part ١: The Perfect Man

.The subject under discussion is about the perfect man from the Islamic perspective

A perfect man means an exemplary human being, who is superior

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and exalted, or any other inference of the sort. Like everything else, a human being may be perfect, or he may be imperfect, regardless of normal functioning, or, being .deficient. However, a normally functional person could be perfect, or imperfect

It is necessary for Muslims to know the definition of a perfect human being from the viewpoint of Islam because it would serve as a model and example, by emulating .what we can by trying to attain our perfection per Islamic teachings

Therefore, we should know what is meant by a perfect man? How he appears spiritually and intellectually, with his peculiarities, in order that we may improve ourselves, and our society based on that model? If we do not know the Islamic definition of a perfect human being, we cannot become a perfect Muslim, or even a .relatively perfect human being

From the viewpoint of Islam, there are two ways of knowing a perfect person: One way is to refer, firstly, to the Holy Qur'an, and secondly, to the traditions (Hadith), for definitions of a perfect man meant to be a best practising Muslim. A perfect Muslim is a person who has attained perfection in Islam; a perfect believer is one who has attained perfection in his faith. Now, we must see how the Holy Qur'an and tradition have portrayed such a person, and with which peculiar attributes. To be considerate, .we have many things to quote from both of these sources

The second way is to regard a

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real individual who is built up on the model of the Holy Qur'an and Islam, and not an imaginary phantasmal being; but a real and objective personality who exists in .various stages of perfection: at its highest level, or, even at slightly lower stages

The holy Prophet (S) himself is an example of a perfect man in Islam. Imam 'Ali ibn Abu Talib is another example. The process of knowing 'Ali (a.s.) reveals a perfect man, meaning that one knows him thoroughly, and not only his name, lineage and apparent identity. We may know that 'Ali is the son of Abu Talib and the grandson of Abd'ul-Muttalib, and that his mother is Fatima, daughter of Assad-bin-Abd'ul-Ezi, and his wife is Fatima Az-Zahra' (a.s.), and he is the father of Imam Hassan (a.s.), and Imam Husayn (a.s.), and the dates he was born and died, and the battles he fought etc. But, this knowledge is not about him as a perfect man. Recognition of 'Ali means knowing .his personality, rather than his person

Once we'll get acquainted with his entire personality, we will know him as a perfect man of Islam to the extent that we'll take him as a model, and accept him in actuality, and not limited as our leader and Imam in literal sense. Following to emulate him, we .will be true Shi'a follower of this perfect man

Shi'a means one who follows 'Ali, not only with words and sentiments, but by practising the philosophical and academic terms

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.lead by 'Ali

These two ways of recognition of the perfect man are practically useful, but we must use this knowledge to follow the ways shown by Islam to become a true Muslim, and .make society truly Islamic

However, the question arises as to the meaning of 'Perfect'. Some things may seem obvious, but explicit things are sometimes harder to explain than complicated .matters

In Arabic the two words meaning 'Perfect' and 'complete' are close to each other but not exactly interchangeable in meaning, and both of them have an antonym meaning 'defective'. The difference between the two words is as follows: The word 'complete' refers to something which is prepared according to a plan, like a house and a mosque, and if any part of it is unfinished, it is incomplete, or, defective. But something may be 'complete'; yet, there may exist a higher degree of completion, or, many degrees higher than that, and that is called 'perfection'. 'Complete' is a horizontal progress to maximum development, and 'perfect' is a vertical climb to the highest degree .possible

When we speak of 'perfect wisdom, or, knowledge', it refers to a higher degree of an already existing wisdom or knowledge. A man may be complete in a horizontal sense, without being perfect vertically. There are people who are half-complete, or, even less than that. But when perfection is attained, there are still higher levels of .perfection until a perfectly “perfect” state is achieved

The term ‘perfect’ did not exist in

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Islamic literature until the seventh century of the Hiijra. It is now used frequently in Europe, but was first used in the Islamic world by the well-known Gnostic "Mohyedin Arabi Andalusi Ta’i", who is the father of Islamic Gnosticism, and many Islamic Gnostics, including Iranian and Persian-speaking ones, and including his pupils like Rumi. Rumi with all his greatness is of lesser calibre compared to Mohyedin, in Gnosticism. He is of Arab descent, and from progeny of Hatem Ta'i, from Andalusia, that is modern-day Spain. He travelled around the Islamic countries, and passed away in Damascus where he was buried. He had a pupil called Sadredin Ghownawi who is rated second to his teacher as a Gnostic. Islamic Gnosticism has been introduced with complexity by Mohyedin, and commentaries of Sadredin. Rumi is a contemporary of the latter and his follower through whom he imbibed the ideas of .Mohyedin

Rumi used the term "perfect man" from the aspect of Gnosticism, but we intend to

discuss it from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an. We have human beings who are physically sound, or, defective. But you do not consider blindness, deafness, paralysis, or, shortness of breath as defects of virtue, personality or humanity. For example, Socrates, the famous Greek philosopher, who is suspected to be a prophet, was considered the ugliest man, but his ugliness is not counted as a defect. Abu'l-Ala Mu'arra, and Taha Husayn of our time were blind. Is blindness a defect in personality? This means that

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a person has physical attributes as well as spiritual ones, each of them distinct from the other. It is a mistake to suppose that the spirit is dependent on the physical body. Can the spirit be sick while the body is sound or not? This is a question in itself. Those, who deny the genuineness of the spirit and believe spiritual peculiarities to be the direct influence of the nervous system, have no belief in the spirit and for them everything is dependent on the body. According to them if the spirit is sick, it is .because the body is sick, and mental sickness is, in fact, related to physical sickness

Fortunately, it has been proved today that even though the body may be healthy in terms of blood composition, nerves, vitamins, etc., it can still cause one to be mentally ill, such as suffering from what is called a "complex", or disorder. Consequently, the method of treating mental illness may not be medicine and drugs at all (physical). Can we find a drug for someone who is suffering from narcissism, which is a kind of mental disorder? Can we change a person's haughtiness into modesty, or, his cruelty into kindness by means of a pill, or, an injection? It is deprivations, which produce such .illnesses, and cause someone, for instance, not to rest until one takes revenge

What is the feeling of revenge? What is the envy which rouses a person to dislike ,other people's enjoyment of a blessing

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and long to deprive them from it? Such a man is not thinking of having that blessing for himself. The envy of a sound person always gives priority to his own goal(s), and

this is not his fault. But desiring ill and defeats for others, is an ailment. You may observe that such individuals are prepared to harm another person to the extent that .they hurt themselves wholly

A historical story is presented in relation to such envy. At the time of a caliph, a rich man bought a slave whom he treated from the beginning, like a gentleman, giving him the best of food, and clothes, and money, as he would do to his own child, and, at times even more lavishly. But, the slave noticed that his master always felt uneasy. Eventually he made up his mind to set him free, and provide him with some capital. One night as they were sitting together, the master said: "Do you know why I have treated you so well?" The slave asked the reason. The master said: "I have one request to make which if you fulfil, you would enjoy all I have given and could have possibly given you! But if you refuse, I will be disappointed with you." The slave said: "I will obey whatever you ask. You are my benefactor who has given me my life." The master said: "You must promise me in good faith to do it, for I am afraid you may ".refuse it

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".The slave said: "I promise to do what you wish

The master said: "My proposal is that you must behead me at a specific time and place." The slave exclaimed: "What? How can I do that?" The master said: "That is what I desire." The slave said: "That is impossible." The master said: "I have got your promise. You must do it." Once it became midnight, he awakened the slave and gave him a sharp knife, and a bag full of money, and climbed up the neighbour's roof and told the slave to behead him there then go wherever he liked. The slave asked the reason for such an act. He answered: "I hate this one man and prefer death to seeing his face. We have been rivals but he has exceeded me and exceled me in everything, so I am very jealous. I desire that he be jailed for this fake murder, and this punishment will be a relief to me. Everyone knows him to be my rival, so he will be blamed and condemned to death for this act." The slave said: "You seem to be a ".foolish man and deserve this death

So, he beheaded the man and ran away. His rival was consequently arrested, and imprisoned, but, no one believed that he would have killed his rival on his own roof. It had become a mystery. In the end, the slave felt a prick in conscience, so he went to .the authorities and confessed the truth

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.When they understood the matter, they freed both the slave and the neighbour

:It is a fact that envy is a disease. The Holy Qur'an says

He will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it."" .((Sura ash-Shams, ۹۱: ۹- ۱۰

Thus, the first proposal of the Holy Qur'an is purification of the self from ailments, complexes, ignorance, deviations and metamorphoses [Metamorphosis means change in physical state?]. You must have heard that in the past there were people who, because of their excess of sins, were cursed by the Prophets of their time and were thus metamorphosed, meaning, they were transformed into animals such as a .monkey, a wolf, a bear etc

One may not become physically metamorphosed, but he may be mentally, or, spirituality transformed into an animal, with such wickedness and nastiness which may not be found in the world. The Holy Qur'an speaks of those "who are in the worse .(errors" and who are lower than quadrupeds(۱

How can that happen? Man's personality depends on his ethical and spiritual qualities, without which he would be a non-conscientious beast. Thus, a defective man may be perceived lowered to the level of a metamorphosed being. Some may think this is a .fantasy, but it is real and true

Someone recalled: "We had made a pilgrimage to Mecca along with Imam Sajjad (a.s.), and when we looked down at the Desert of Arafat it was full of Hajjis (pilgrims). There were so many of them

.Sura al-'A'raf, ٧: ١٧٩ -١

that year. The Imam said: "There is much uproar, but few are true pilgrims." The man says: "I don't know how the Imam gave me the insight, but when he asked me to look down again, I saw a desert full of animals, like that in a zoo, among whom a few human beings were moving about." The Imam told him how things looked to those .who had a clear sight and were concerned with the inward concept/essence of things

This is quite obvious, but, our so-called modernized mind being incapable of accepting it puts us at fault. In our own time, there have been, and are individuals, who have discerned the real character of others, who appear like animals, as they know nothing except eating, sleeping and sexual intercourse (lusting). They had lost their higher :human qualities (intellect), and been turned into beasts. We read in the Holy Qur'an

The day on which the trumpet shall be blown, so you shall come forth in hosts, and" .(the heaven shall be opened so that it shall be all openings." (Sura an-Naba, ٧٨- ۶

Religious leaders have accentuated that only one group of people will be raised from among the dead in the shape of human beings; others would appear as animals: tigers, monkeys, scorpions, snakes and ants. Does God do so without a reason? No, there are logical reasons. When a human being has done nothing in this world but mocked, and hurt others, he takes his real form in the

next world as a scorpion. He who acts like a monkey in this world, will appear as a .monkey in the next world. And, a person with a doggish nature will appear as a dog

Thus, all people will be raised from the dead according to their past intentions, desires, and true character(s) in the finite world. Are your desires in this world those of a human being, or, a beast, or, a bird? If so, you will take that form on the day of resurrection. That is why we are forbidden to worship any but one God. If we worship

anything else, we will have it with us in the hereafter. If we worship money it becomes part of our nature, and as the Holy Qur'an says that molten metal will be a :punishment on the day of resurrection

And (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way," announce to them a painful chastisement, on the day when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with .(it; this is what you hoarded up for yourselves." (Sura at-Tawbah, ۹:۳۴-۳۵

Do not be mistaken that currency (paper) notes have taken the place of coins; in the next world, these banknotes would be turned into a fire as scorching as gold and !silver coins

So, a human being with a psychological "complex" is deficient, and one who worships

a physical matter (idols) is imperfect, and metamorphosed (on the day of judgement as well in this world as it may appear to only few enlightened among the blessed ones). The sense of Perfection in one kind of creature is different from perfection in another kind. A perfect human being is different from a perfect angel, and each creation has a separate degree of perfection that classifies it as "Perfect". Those who have told us of the existence of angels, say that they are created with pure intelligence, in which the earthly aspect like lust, anger, etc. are absent, whereas ."animals are wholly earthly, and lack what the Holy Qur'an terms as a "divine spirit

But man is a mixture of the two, both angelic and earthly creation, both high and low. This is described in a narration in the book "Usul al-Kafi", and Rumi, the poet, has :turned it into a poem of which the translation is as follows

A narration says that the Glorious God created three different groups of creatures:" The first group is the angels who are pure intellect, knowledge and liberty, and act only in prostration. They lack every element of greed and passion, but are pure light, and alive with the love of God. The second group, lacks knowledge altogether, and is

fattened like the animals in the pasture, they see nothing but the shelter and fodder, and are ignorant of both vice and honour, The third group are human beings who are half angel

and half donkey, the donkey half is inclined to the low and the other half is inclined to the sublime; one must see which half wins the day, and which one conquers the ",other

:The Holy Qur'an says

Surely we have created man from a small life-germ uniting' (itself): We mean to try" him, so we have made him hearing, seeing. Surely we have shown him the way. He .(may be thankful or unthankful."(Sura al-Insan, ۷۶: ۲-۳

This means that the man has been granted many talents, and left with free will to use discretion whether he deserves reward, or punishment by his actions. However, the other creatures do not possess such discretion, One must choose his own way and .attain perfection through moderation and equilibrium and by employing all his talents

A child grows up and is complete with all the organs, and limbs, and these develop harmoniously. But if he grows up cartoon-like, that are some parts develop to excess, and others do not grow at all or grow insufficiently, he cannot attain completion. But a harmonious and well-rounded development may result in a complete, and possibly perfect human being. [perfection is replaced with completeness as perfection contradicts the definition of the author in my opinion, more appropriate would be [""complete

:The Holy Qur'an says

And when his Lord tried Abraham with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said:" Surely I will make you an Imam of men. Abraham said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the

.(unjust, said He."(Sura al-Baqarah, ۲: ۱۲۴

Abraham was tested in many ways, including his readiness to sacrifice his son for :God, when a call from God said

And we called out to him saying: O Abraham! You have indeed shown the truth of the" .(vision." (The Holy Qur'an, Sura as-Saffat, ۳۷: ۱۰۴

When Abraham successfully passed through various trials, the Holy Qur'an said about :him

Surely Abraham was an exemplar, obedient to Allah, upright, and he was not of the" .(polytheists."(Sura an-Nahl, ۱۶: ۱۲۰

He stood alone fighting against all unbelievers, and it was then that God called him an Imam, a leader and a model for others to follow. Imam 'Ali is a perfect man since all ..the human values have had their maximum growth in him with synergy

You have watched the low and high tide in the sea, which is caused by the gravitational attraction of the moon. The spirit of man, too, as well as that of society shows a similar tide-like movement. The human beings undergo such ebb and swell, and this attraction is sometimes to one direction to such an extent that all other values are forgotten. In this way, they are like defective beings that show growth in one aspect, and lack of it in other aspects. Society may lack harmony in its development; this is true that it is not wholly deviated but it is very often corrupted to .certain degrees in one way or another

One of the human values confirmed by Islam

is devotion, which is communion with God. Of course, in Islam every act performed for God only, is devotion. Having a job and a trade to support oneself, and one's family, and to serve society is in itself a form of devotion. But devotion, in its special sense, is

private communion with God in prayer, hymns, staying sleep deprived for vital (prayer) acts at nights etc., all of which are part of religion,. Sometimes, you see individuals, or, society being drawn only to one aspect of devotion; that is performing the obligatory and recommended acts of prayer, ablution etc., all of which, done in .excess, will impede progress of society

Commonly this way of devotion becomes ritualistic in sense in an Islamic society, and once one gets used to it, it is difficult to observe moderation. Such a person cannot say to himself that God has created him a human being, not an angel, and as a human .being he should develop every aspect of himself harmoniously

It was once reported to the Prophet that a number of his companions had sunk in devotion of such ritualistic kind. The Prophet felt uneasy. He came to the mosque, and exclaimed out loud: "O People, what has happened to some groups who have appeared among my people. Even I as your Prophet do not show devotion in this way to keep awake all night. I rest part of the night, and attend to my family. I do not ".observe fast every day

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Those who are following their new way have deviated from my tradition: " Thus, when the Prophet notices that an Islamic practice is about to corrupt other Islamic practices, he deals with such trend seriously. Amr ibn Aas had two sons called Abdullah, and Muhammad. The former was inclined towards practising true Islam, and advised his father to follow the way of 'Ali, while the latter, who like his father loved the world and position, urged his father to follow Mu'awiah. Abdullah was mostly inclined to devotion. One day, the Prophet met him on the way and said: "I hear that you spend the whole night in prayer and the whole day fasting." He replied in the affirmative. The Prophet said: "But I am not so, and I do not agree with your ".way

Societies could be drawn towards asceticism. Asceticism is an undeniable value which must exist in a prosperous society. But, when everything in a society is based on asceticism and nothing else, there is something wrong with it. On the contrary,

another value is to serve people, and it is fully supported in Islam, and by the Prophet, :and the Holy Qur'an

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but" ,(righteousness is this that one should believe in Allah…."(Sura al-Baqarah, ۲:۱۷۷

The verse ends emphasizing the value of serving God's creatures. But sometimes people go to excess and, as the poet Sa'di says: "Devotion is nothing but serving people". (but

(not excessive ritualistic devotion

The next step is to the value of devotion, asceticism [asceticism means excessive devotion which is ritualistic so it's not exactly exalted?], knowledge, or, jihad, all of which are the exalted values for man in Islam. Today, some of our intellectuals imagine that they have found a very lofty principle called "humanity and humanitarianism". Serving people is fine, and we should serve them. But only providing the humanity with food and clothes would be treating them like animals, especially if one supposes no higher value(s) exist for them. If service is confined to this, what would be the difference between Abu Dharr and Mu'awiah? This is another example of going to excess, similar to the overvaluing of freedom

Freedom is among the highest of human values which is above man's animal nature, and material values. You can see that those who possess humanity are willing to endure hunger and nakedness, and live under harsh conditions, provided they are not enslaved by another human being and can live freely. A story is told in this regard in the book of "The Mirror of Scholars", about Avicenna who held the rank of a minister .for some time

One day, Avicenna was passing through a street with great pomp, and show when he noticed a scavenger removing putrid stuff from a pit. Avicenna heard him murmuring to himself a couplet meaning that he honoured his 'self' for finding his world easy.

Avicenna laughed at the man who was doing

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the undesirable task so candidly. He drew the rein of his horse and called the man to him, and remarked sarcastically: "What a way to choose to honour the "self"! The man on recognizing Avicenna by his appearance said: "I have chosen this job so that I would not be the slave of another in the way you are! To enjoy freedom while being a scavenger is far better than your rank, assets, and dependence," It is said that .Avicenna became red in the face with shame, and had no answer to give

According to the worldly and animal aspirations, there is no point in forsaking the best food, and having servants and all that pomp and show, or, becoming a scavenger, and speaking of freedom. Is freedom something tangible? No, but for a vigilant conscience, it is so worthy that a man prefers scavenging for food to slavery. This value is sometimes forgotten in some societies, but when it is awakened in them, they claim freedom to be the only value, and forget about other values like justice, wisdom etc. Others may consider love as the only value, and forget the intellect, as the Gnostics do; while some go to the other extreme, thinking love to be a fancy, and intellect as the only worthy thing

Love, intellect, justice, freedom, service to humanity and devotion are all values. Who is a perfect human being? An absolute devotee, or ascetic, or, freeborn, or, in love, or, intelligent? None of these

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alone make a perfect man. But, if all these values are developed in him in a harmonious way, he may be considered perfect, and Imam 'Ali was such a man. In Nahjul-Balagha you meet mostly the eloquent side of him, and in reading this book, you get different pictures of him. Sometimes reading his sermons, which are so vivid, you presume that Ali is actually there conducting in front of you. Similarly, you observe Rumi, or, Mohyedin Arabi speaking to you in person. When you analyze the narrative of Ferdowsi, or, a man of liberty, or an ascetic, or, a retiring devotee, is vividly

expressed in a state of giving discourses. All human aspects show themselves in 'Ali's words; now, you discern how eloquent and truthful he is compared to our meagre .sense of being

About fifty years ago, our society was tuned, in religious matters, towards asceticism. Preachers often confined themselves to those sermons of Nahjul-Balagha which were related to ascetic matters, calling this world a transient place, and the next .world eternal, and advising people to prepare for the hereafter

The rest of the sermons were not asserted because the society could not conceive them as real value(s). For a period of about hundred years, no one gave significant pondering to the decree of Imam 'Ali to Malik Ashtar, which is full of social and political (injunctions.(١

There, 'Ali speaks of an utterance of the Prophet that "people cannot attain the degree of sanctity, and freedom from

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.Nahjul Balagha, letter ۵٣ -١

defect until they reach a position where the weak stand against the strong, and claim their right without stuttering". Fifty years ago the society could not understand this, because there was a society focused on single value, while 'Ali's words contain all .human values as shown in his biography, and personality

I do not intend to give the impression that our society at present is praiseworthy indefinitely, but, fortunately some worthy values have appeared in it. However, I am anxious that once more, in the course of life, they may become monolithic, and destroy other values by neglecting them. If we follow Imam 'Ali (as) as our model, a perfectly well balanced man, this should not happen. He is a man in whom all human values have developed harmoniously. At night, and during the communion with God, no Gnostic can rival him in his divine ecstasy, and his flight towards God. He was delved in his devotion that nothing could possibly divert his attention, and that divine

love seemed to have taken him to another world. That is how he was in the altar .(mosque, or, masjid) at night

During the daytime, he was a different man. Unlike many ascetics, he was cheerful, attended his companions, and was found to be witty. Amr ibn Aas criticized him, and termed him as unsuitable for the Caliphate since he was so cheerful, as if a caliph must always look glum to apprehend people. In battle too he was cheerful, and smiling, while

.in the altar he was mournful

:The Holy Qur'an says

Surely, the rising by night is the firmest way to tread and the most corrective of" speech.. Surely, you have, in the day time, a long occupation."(Sura al- Muzzamil, ۷۳: ۶-.(۷

The night is for worship, and the day for living and mingling with society. The poet Hafiz is sometimes misperceived as malevolent on pretext of conspiring to mislead youth. It is said that this great poet was addicted to wine, whereas in reality, his poems are wholly spiritual and mystical, and his wine is of a spiritual nature figuratively speaking. He was a religious man who was a commentator of the Holy Qur'an, and, later on, became famous as a poet. He has expressed the above Verse of the Holy Qur'an in a poem, saying that daytime is for work and effort, and night time .for the wine (figuratively) of devotion

Ali is such a man, and has been recognized in this way for over a thousand years. The' compiler of "Nahjul-Balagha", Syed Razi, says: "The amazing thing about this book is that you see 'Ali in so many different worlds as you read it, that is in the words of devotion, philosophy, mysticism, military affairs, court of justice, religious jurisprudence and so on, and he is never absent from any aspect of the human ".(earthly) world

Safiyedin Hilli, a poet of the sixth century of the Hijrah, compliments 'Ali that he was a collection of all paradoxes, he was both

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a ruler, and a sage, docile and brave, poor and wealthy (knowledge), gentle and resolute, and a devotee and a common man. He was a hero in all human spheres, something that we cannot be, but we can at least maintain a certain degree of equilibrium among all values to be called a true Muslim in different walks of life.

Part ٢: The Nature of Man

We know that there are different perspectives on the nature of man, two of which are contradictory to each other: the mentality of the spiritualists and that of the materialists.

According to the spiritualists' mentality, man in reality is composed of body and spirit. The spirit is eternal, and does not perish with death of the body, and we may analyze the Islamic sources that confirm this perspective.

According to materialists' mentality, a man comprises only as a functioning machine called the "body", which is annihilated with death, and its dismemberment means the dissolution of his personality eternally.

In spite of this great difference in perspectives, there is commonality between both groups of thought. The common grounds are that there are certain non-material elements which may be called intellectual, and which give a man his sense of self value, and personality. If he is deprived of intellect, he will relegate to the level of animals. Sa'di, the poet, has expressed this idea in the following poem:

"Man's body is ennobled by his soul,

And this fine garment is not a sign of humanity

If man were known by his

,eyes, nose, mouth and ears

"?What difference would there be between a picture on the wall and humanity

There is a saying: "How easy it is to become a scholar and how difficult to be a human .being." It requires so many qualities that depend on one's personality and worth

:Deviations which take place in an individual, or, society are of two kinds

Anti-values: stand against values, such as tyranny against justice, suppression (١ against freedom, atheism and lack of discipline against devotion and worship, and foolishness and stupidity against wisdom and intelligence. Most deviations do not .belong to this group, because such anti-values are soon defeated

Another group of deviations takes the form of a cancerous growth of one value (not (٢ vices) which obliterates all other values through over expression. For example, asceticism is a value and requisite for humanity, but a person, or, society may turn to it to the extent of over doing it and ignoring every other value. Human values may be said to come under one heading, as expressed by Gnostics and modern theologians, .and that is a feeling of pain, something which animals lack

Pain is a source of discomfort, but at the same time it gives an awareness to find the cause, and consequential remedy. In this way, it is a blessing even though it causes :some loss. Rumi expresses this idea in a poem

The sigh, and groaning which are due to pain, provide a wakefulness at that time." When you

fall ill, you feel penitent of guilt. And, a sin will seem ugly to you. Then you resolve to follow the right path, and promise yourself to obey now onwards. So it is certain that sickness has this benefit that it grants you alertness and consequential alleviation of pain. Know then, you who are searching for causes, that the greater the pain, the

".greater is the awareness and the greater the awareness, the paler the visage

Being unable to feel pain is like having no stimulus, and lack of corresponding response. It is tantamount to being ignorant. Which is better? To be stupid and ?ignorant, and feel no pain, or, to be aware and alert, and feel the pain

It is sometimes said that being a lean Socrates is preferable to being a fat pig. Being learned and wise, but deprived of comforts, is better than a fool enjoying all comforts. Literature is full of complaints of having intelligence, for it deprives its owner of :comfort and convenience. A poet says

,My intelligence and wisdom are my enemies"

".I wish that my eyes and ears were not open

:Another poet says

,Do not be wise to grieve for the crazy"

Be crazy to be grieved for by the wise

But such an expression is incongruous. He who attains the level of humanity, and understands the worth of sensitivity and pain, never says that his intelligence and wisdom are his enemies. He would rather repeat the utterance of the Prophet that "The true

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".friend of a person is his intelligence and his real enemy is his ignorance

He who considers his intelligence to be his enemy, never feels the uneasiness and misfortunes caused by ignorance, otherwise he would not make such a remark. Even during physical illness, there has to be pain logically, otherwise the illness could not be diagnosed, and consequently treated; an illness which is sudden and without pain is

.most dangerous

What is human pain? It does not mean only physical pain. It is a metaphysical pain considered sacred by mystics, and is peculiar to human beings, for this reason a human being is preferable to an angel, for, an angel is free from pain; therefore, unable to appreciate the quality of such ability that the human beings seek God in their state of pain, while withdraw in a state of sensual pleasure. The man is in reality produced by divine breath in another world, and is not wholly homogeneous with the things of this world. He has a feeling of strangeness, and alienation with all other creatures here since they are all changeable, and perishable, and not worthy of indefinite attachment. The Man, however, has perpetual anxiety, and this is what draws him towards devotion, and worship of God, communion with Him, and .proximity to Him, as his origin

There are many parables in mysticism about returning to one's origin. Poets speak of a parrot brought in a cage from India always longing to break open the cage, and

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fly back home. Rumi tells the story of a reed which is cut off from its reed-bed, and you hear the moan of the pipe lamenting this separation, and longing for the reunion. Sometimes they compare a person to an elephant which must be constantly knocked .on the head so that it gets no chance to think of its Indian homeland

Most of these parables mean to say that a human being is anxious to return to the original world, and feels the pain of separation, and longs for a divine reunion. Imam ‘Ali, in a conversation with Kumayl Ibin-Ziad, declares that there is no one to whom he may divulge the secret of his heart. But, he says there are some individuals in the world who have attained the point of perfect certainty in knowledge, and feel that there is no space to separate them from the spirit of certitude. That thing, namely contentment, which is difficult for pleasure-seeking men, and materialists to achieve, is feasible for them, and what is the source of obstruction for the materialists, namely .acquaintance of God, is the means of companionship for the latter

Spiritualists go along with people, but their spirits soar high, and they feel connected to the physical as well as metaphysical worlds, simultaneously, going through the .mystic, and devotional "pains", and communions that 'Ali had

This love of God makes the devotee wholly unconscious of what goes on around him, and he does not feel any pain even if

an arrow is being pulled out of his body. This pain of separation from God, and longing for divine proximity do not end until he attains his goal of joining God. The Holy Qur'an .says the heart is soothed by one thing only, and that is the reminiscence of God

Rumi quotes the parable of a man who was constantly in communion with God, and kept on repeating the divine name. The Satan (devil) came to him once, and tempted him in such a manner that he stopped his invocations henceforth. One day, Satan came to the man again and said: "With all your repetition of the name of God and your wakefulness at dawn for devotion and your longing, did you ever hear once from God saying: "Here I am?" If you had gone to any other door, and groaned so much, you would have received a response at least once." This remark appeared logical to the man, so he kept silent. In a dream, an invisible voice asked him as to why he had abandoned his communion. He answered that despite all his longing, and pain of love, he had never received an answer. The voice said: "I am sent by God to give you an ".answer. The pain of love that He has put in your heart is the response

Imam 'Ali, in his prayer (du'a) of Kumayl, says: "O God, forgive that sin which causes my praying to be confined, and the pain of it to

be removed." Thus, the implied meaning is that the prayer is a goal to appreciate God in itself, and not always the means of receiving an answer favourable to one's .personal/selfish like, or, dislikes

Another group claims that the criterion of humanity is to feel the pain of God's

:creatures, and as Sa'di, the poet, says

„It is not poverty that has made me pale"

".I am pale because of grieving for the poor

If the hunger and pains of others become more difficult to bear than one's own hunger and pain, it is a value which is the basis of compassionate personality, and a source of other human values. It involves a feeling of responsibility towards other .human beings, and their needs, and sufferings

We see its perfect example in Imam 'Ali, especially the last fasting month of Ramadhan in his life. For him it had a new delight, and for his household it was full of anxiety, because his behaviour in that month was quite different from the fasting .months of previous years

:Ali (as) speaks of the following Holy Qur'anic verse'"

Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, We believe, and not be tried? And" certainly we tried those before them, so Allah will certainly know those who are true .(and He will certainly know the liars." (Sura al- 'Ankabut, ۲۹: ۲- ۳

He says: "As soon as this Verse descended, I knew that great seditions and trials lay in store for these people, and

I asked the Prophet what the Verse meant!" The Prophet answered: "After me, my people will be tested and tried." I (Ali) said: "Those who were martyred in the Battle of Uhud were seventy in number headed by Hamza-bin-Abdul-Muttalib, while I was uneasy not to receive the blessing of martyrdom. Why was I deprived of this?" The Prophet said: "If you were not martyred there, you will be martyred in the way of ".God

In the battle of Uhud, 'Ali (a.s.) was just twenty-five, had recently wedded Fatimah (a.s.), and had Hassan (as) as his first offspring. A young family usually expects a

gradual progress in life whereas the only great wish of ‘Ali was to get martyred in the way of God. The Prophet then asked ‘Ali (as): "How much fortitude will you show in martyrdom?" ‘Ali answered: "Please do not speak of fortitude; ask me rather how ".grateful I will be

Due to the Prophet's utterance, and of the signs, which ‘Ali (as) recognized, and explained, his family and companions became worried. In the last month of fasting in his life, he went as a guest to different places to break his fast, but ate very little. His children asked him sympathetically why he abstained from food so much. He answered that he wished to meet his God with an empty stomach. Then, they realized that ‘Ali (as) was anticipating something in near future. Sometimes, he looked up at :the sky and said

What my beloved Prophet has"

told me is true and quite near." On the night before the ١٩th of Ramadhan, the .children were with him for a time

Then, Imam Hassan went back to his own house. ‘Ali (as) had a private enclosure for prayer where he retired for communion with his Lord after attending to his private, and public affairs. The sun had not risen yet when Imam Hassan went into his private chamber to see his father. ‘Ali (as) had a special affection for Fatimah's children. He said to his son: "As I was sitting there last night, I fell into a slumber, and dreamt of the Prophet to whom I said: "I have suffered so much through your people." He said: "Curse them", I cursed them and prayed God to take me away from them, and send ".an incompetent person to them

It is strange to see people not following ‘Ali (as) to his way, and causing him so much suffering. Such were Ayesha's companions who broke their allegiance with Ali. So, Muawiah with his conceit, knew well what would hurt ‘Ali (as) the most. So, he used the 'Outcasts' rebels (Khawarij) who heartily, and zealously murdered ‘Ali (as). When someone hears all the tragic events, he/she wonders at ‘Ali's fortitude, and realizes as

to why, in his dream, he spoke of his sufferings to the Prophet, the cackling of ducks is heard from outside the house, and 'Ali (as) predicts that very soon the sound of wailing, and lamentation will

.dominate that cackling

His family came forward to stop him from going to the mosque that day, and suggested sending someone else to lead the congregational prayer instead. At first, he mentioned the name of Ja'dat-bin-Hobeira, his nephew, as substitute. But he changed his mind and said he himself would go to lead the prayer. He is asked to have someone as company, but refuses. Later that day when he was laid down with his terrible wound, he said: "I swear by God that the blow of the sword on my forehead was like a lover being united with his beloved, or, like a person looking in a dark night ".for a well where he could pitch his tent, and is overjoyed to find it

Anyhow, while setting off for the mosque he was ecstatic, and tried to understand the reason. He felt that a great event was about to take place after he cried out the call of summoning the faithful to prayer, he bade farewell to that dawn, and said: "O dawn, has there been a day in 'Ali's life when you appeared to find him asleep? Henceforth, ".his eyes will be closed for ever

As he descended from his pedestal, he said: "Open the way to a fighting believer." We see him as a perfect man who, in all his epic struggles, always remembered God, and feared nothing in God's plan. As the spiritualists men say, a man is himself the gate through which he enters

the world of spirituality. Therefore, there are elements in man's essence, which are not in harmony with the world of matter. This is not only what old psychologists .believed, but modern ones, too, admit it explicitly

The holy Prophet (saw) says: "He who knows himself knows God", and the Holy

:Qur’an devotes a separate account for man as against all other creatures. It says

We will soon show them our signs in the Universe and in their own souls, until it will" become quite clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient as regards your Lord .(that He is a witness over all things?" (Sura Fussilat, ۴۱: ۵۳

You may wonder about the elements in man which cannot be accounted for by material things? This necessitates a long discussion, and is related to answering human core values, and the sense of man's humanity. In the case of animals, there is no separation between them and their entity. A horse is a horse, a dog is a dog, a tiger is a tiger; but, a man may lack humanity, that is, those qualities which are the basis of personality. And, though these qualities pertain to this world, they are not tangible; .but, are spiritual rather than material

Secondly, the criterion of man’s humanity, and what gives him personality, is not set forth by nature, or, anyone else, but by man himself. Imam ‘Ali-bin-Musa-ar-Reza, the eighth Imam, says: "What is there is known through what is here." As it was

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mentioned before, all the human values may be summed up into a single value, and that is, having a feeling of pain above various human pains, or, the pain of every living creature. It is the pain of being a stranger to this world, and being separated from his origin in the other world. He longs to return to his own home, and to God, from the earthly world to heaven from where he was driven out incipiently. Yet, his coming into .this world has not been wrong, and futile, and has been sent for a purpose

No matter how resplendent, and perfect a man becomes, one still feels one has not reached the ultimate. One desires something, and when he secures it, one feels no longing for it. Someone said: "I was going round a foreign museum, when I saw the statue of a very beautiful woman lying down on a bed and a fine young man standing on the bed with one leg on the floor and his face turned away from the woman, as if he was on the point of running away." He could not understand what the sculptor had meant by this scene. He asked someone what it meant, and was told: "This scene

illustrates the thought of Plato that a man turns with great love, and zeal to something, but on attaining it, that longing dies away, and ends there. It is the ".beginning of weariness: dislike and escape

Others who have pondered more

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deeply over this issue say that man is a creature who cannot be in love with what is limited, and perishable, forever. He longs for absolute perfection, and loves nothing else. That means love of God. Even those who deny God, or, even abuse the Divine, are unaware that in the depth of their nature they love God, but they have lost the way to their beloved. Mohyedin Arabi says no human being has loved anyone, but his own God. The Prophets have not come to teach creatures the name of God, and His worship, for this is inherent in human nature. They have come to show the difference between the right, and wrong paths, and tell men that they are really in love with absolute perfection. If you think that money, or, social status in life is perfection, you are wrong. The Prophets came to unveil and diminish falsehood, and enable men to find their beloved through venerations, which we have seen performed by Imam 'Ali :(as). The Holy Qur'an says

Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah;" .(now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest." (Sura ar-Ra'd, ١٣:٢٨

The Holy Qur'an does not ask people not to seek wealth, rank, or comfort, but it says that these things do not give peace and tranquillity, for they are not their ultimate .goal

Other schools of thought emphasize human pain (compassion) for God's creatures, ,and not for God. The Gnostics

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while referring to man's progress towards perfection, say that he embarks on four :journeys

.Man's journey towards God (۱

.His journey with God in God, meaning knowing Him (۲

His journey with God towards God’s creatures (۳

.His journey with God among creatures for their salvation (۴

Nothing can be said better than the above, as long as man is separated from God, everything is wrong, But, after communion with God, and knowing, and approaching Him, and feeling Him with himself, one returns to His creatures in the company of God, to help and salvage them, and bring them near God. If we say that a man journeys from people towards God, he does not attain anything. And if we say he moves towards human beings without moving towards God, he will be like materialist human schools of today, being inconsistent with replacing an infinite objective with a .finite goal, because it is absolutely false

Only those who have absolved themselves first, can deliver others from being enslaved by nature, and other human beings. It means freedom from one's carnal desires to begin with, and from the domination of external nature, and others in the .second place

From the viewpoint of Islam, Is a perfect man the one who feels the pain of others, or, ?feels for God and then feels the pain of His creatures

:The Holy Qur’an says

Then maybe you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not" believe in this announcement." (Sura

.(Kahf, ۱۸:۶

This Verse shows the Prophet (saw) was eager to guide, and deliver people from the .captivities and difficulties of this world that he could kill himself by grieving for others

:Then, two other Verses refer to the same thing

We have not revealed the Holy Qur'an to you that you may be unsuccessful."(Sura" .(Ta Ha, ۲۰:۲

:And

Certainly, an Apostle has come to you from among yourselves, grievous to him is" your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you, to the believers (he is) .(compassionate, merciful" (Sura at-Tawbah ,۹:۱۲۸

Thus, the Prophet felt for other human beings, and did the utmost to the satisfaction .of God, for the humanity

A Muslim must feel both for God, and for God's creatures. At times you must have seen a father taking much trouble, and spending much money for his children's education that he seemed spendthrift with respect to the spending. The Prophet, too, .showed the same zeal for his people

Imam 'Ali (as), too, showed the same feeling as mentioned in "Nahjul-Balagha". He received a report from Basra that Othman-bin-Hanif has taken part in a feast. There had been no drinking, gambling, or debauchery. Even then, 'Ali (as) reproached the Governor for attending a wholly aristocratic feast where no poor person had been present. Then, 'Ali (as) began to describe his own pains, saying that he could obtain all means of comfort, and pleasure himself if he wished, but would not leave the reins of his life in the hands of desires. He was thinking

of all those in various lands who were poor, and in great need. That is what 'feeling the pains of others' means, He says: "Should I be satisfied with the title of Caliph and "?commander of the faithful, without sharing the troubles of the faithful

Avicenna compares this pain to itching which is painful, but pleasant when someone scratches himself. It is not a bitter feeling. In mourning for Imam Husayn, tears are

shed because one feels the pain, yet, one loves to participate in such ceremonies. There, one feels the spirit not to be alone, but it is the spirit of all the bodies. Such a spirit motivates one to wear patched up shoes in spite of all available resources in .order to be one with a spirit like ‘Ali' s

A poet says grief upon that spirit which is great, for in being great it feels everyone's pain, and its task becomes crucial. ‘Ali (as) saw a woman carrying a water skin, and thought that she must be lonely to undertake such a task: he approached her, and politely offered her help, she accepted the offer, and on reaching her house, he asked her if she had anyone to help her. She said that her husband has been killed in the service of ‘Ali-bin-Abi-Talib, and she had no one to look after her. On hearing that, ‘Ali's whole body was shaken with pity, and he could not sleep all night. Next morning, he and his companions carried some

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provisions to her house, and there he cooked some meat, fed her orphans, and caressed them, saying: "Forgive ‘Ali for having neglected you". Then, he lit the oven, and came near to feel its heat, and said to himself: "‘Ali, feel this heat so that you could not forget the heat of hell for neglecting the orphans, the poor and others". This .is an example of a perfect Islamic man

As I said before, when some values prevail radically, these eventually overshadow other values, for instance, an inclination to worship to the extent of forgetting other duties. Now I feel that another radical wave is about to develop, and that is an inclination to social matters of Islam, and neglect of godly duties. If we are to deviate from the path of moderation in Islam, what difference would there be between ?forgetting the society by turning to worship, and vice versa

:The Holy Qur’an says

Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the" unbelievers, compassionate among themselves, You will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allah and pleasure; their marks are in

their faces because of the effect of prostration; that is their description in the Old and New Testaments; like a seed produce that puts forth its sprout, then strengthens it, so it becomes stout and stands firmly on its stem, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the unbelievers on account of them; Allah has promised those among

.(them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward."(Sura al-Fath, ۴۸: ۲۹

:Elsewhere, the Holy Qur'an says

Surely Allah loves those who fight in His way in ranks as if they were a firm and" .(compact wall."(Sura as-Saff, ۶۱:۴

Here, the Verse describes the Prophet's companions, and those trained by him, and calls those as the enemies of truth" who cover the face of truth, while believers stand firmly against these enemies, and when they are among faithful people, they are .perfectly kind to, and united with them

This is the social characteristic of Islamic society, which has been neglected for so many centuries. The Holy Qur'an continues to say, referred to above that these people who are highly social, always ask God for more, and more for society, and desire God's satisfaction, and that is the highest degree of their devotion(۱). The Holy :Qur'an says

They who turn (to Allah) who serve (Him), who praise (Him), who fast, who bow" down, who prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and who keep the limits of Allah and give good news to the believers." (Sura at-Tawbah, .(۹:۱۱۲

These are the divine qualities of a people, and those who reform society. And the Holy :Qur'an speaks of

The patient, and the truthful, and the obedient, and those who spend (benevolently),"

.(and those who ask forgiveness in the morning times." (Sura 'Ali-'Imran, ۳: ۱۷

The word 'patience' in Holy Qur'an stands for 'resistance, especially for those who are honest and

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.Sura al-Fath, ۴۸:۲۹ -۱

.truthful ones, in battle; and all the qualities mentioned in the verse are inseparable

There is a description of the companions of Imam Mahdi, the twelfth Imam, in various narrations saying: "All night, they are engrossed in worship, and in the daytime they are like lions." There is another narration about the Prophet's companions, which says: "The Prophet went one day to visit the companions at Safa, habitually. It was between dawn and sunrise. He saw a young man staggering along, his eyes sunk in the sockets,, and looking frail. The Prophet asked him: "How did you begin your morning?" He answered: "I have begun it with certainty," meaning what "You have ."told us through the tongue and ear, I have found it through insight

The Prophet said: "There is a sign for everything. What is the sign of your certainty?" He answered: "Its sign is that it keeps me thirsty in daytime, and sleepless at night." meaning his certainty does not allow him to break his fast, or, to sleep, The Prophet said: "This is not enough. I want further signs." He answered: "Now that I am in this world I have a vision of the next world, and I hear the voices of those who are in both heaven, and hell. Let me name those of your followers who are in heaven, and those (.in hell. (Rumi has expressed all this in a poem

Then, the Prophet asked him: "What is your wish?" He answered: Martyrdom in the

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way of God." Thus, this man is a true Muslim with that wish, and in the way he spends his days, and nights. It is his feeling for God that has produced his other feeling of :pain. The Holy Qur'an says

O you who believe! Seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely Allah is with" .(the patient."(Sura al-Baqarah, ۲: ۱۵۳

To be an authentic Muslim in society, you must pray with all sincerity. Some people despise prayer, consider it be suitable for old women, and think it enlightenment to be only sociable. You may have heard that Omar (first caliph) omitted the sentence of "Hasten to good deeds" from the call to prayer. He thought it as an enlightened step, but he was wrong. His time was the peak of Islamic victories, and effervescence of Islamic Jihad. Soldiers attacked the enemy in groups and, in spite of being small in number, vanquished it. Their number was no more than fifty to sixty thousand, and yet they fought against two empires, each of which had an army of several hundred thousand. The soldiers of Islam fought on two fronts, and were victorious in both. Omar's reason for that omission was that as the people are called to pray, which is the best devotion, and the best deed, they would think that there is no need to call them to other good deeds such as the jihad, for, it would divert them, and substitute :prayer for other deeds. He suggested substituting the sentence

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.(Hasten to good deeds" with "Prayer is better than sleep" (call for prayer at dawn"

He did not contemplate as to why the small army of Islam was victorious over larger armies. Was it the superiority of weapons of the Arabs over those of the Persians, and the Romans? No, because the two civilized countries of that time were well equipped while the Arabs' armaments were substandard. Was it because the Arab race was stronger? Again no, for, we have seen what Shahpur, the King of Iran, did to the Arabs, and how he fastened iron chains to their shoulders. It was the power of faith that defeated the Persian, and the Roman armies, and the power that is derived from ".that sentence in daily prayer: "Hasten to good deeds

When a man stands at night to have communion with God, his morale is elevated. The Prayer means revitalizing faith, and the repetition of the phrase "God is great" in prayer makes everything else seem so trivial, and insignificant. Such a man, on seeing so many hundred thousands of soldiers before him, says to himself: "God is greater

than all, all powers belong to Him, and we should rely on Him'. It is the prayer that gives him strength. When going to holy war is a duty incumbent on a person, he must report, and his staying on for prayer in the mosque is prohibited. The condition for the prayer to be acceptable to God is to go on a

jihad, while the condition for the jihad to be acceptable to God is to perform ones prayer. The Prayer without jihad is null and void, and jihad without prayer is likewise, .null and void

In the system of Islamic values, devotion ranks at the top, but, it must be based on the conditions corresponding to the Holy Qur'anic criteria. The Prayer is real only when it shows its effect by being vigilant over wicked acts. It is the prayer that leads .to other worthy values

Ali (as) is the sun of all Islamic values, and a comprehensive personality. On one' occasion we see him as a protagonist in the battle field, as if he had been a soldier all his life. Then, we find him elsewhere as a mystic, who knows nothing except loving the communion with God. As an example, we cite two cases from "Nahjul-Balagha". In the first case, a military encounter of 'Ali (as) with Muawiah at Siffin, on the bank of the Euphrates. Muawiah ordered his men to block the way to the river so that 'Ali's .men could not have access to water, and would be forced to surrender

Ali proposed to hold debate with his enemies to solve the problem, and to prevent' unnecessary bloodshed between two groups of Muslims. Muawiah discussed the matter in his war council, and it was decided not to let 'Ali's men have access to water. 'Ali (as) delivered a discourse to his men, which was more effective than

a thousand drums, trumpets, and military anthems. He told them the obvious fact that Muawiah had gathered a number of perverse men, and had blocked the way of 'Ali's men to water, and said: "You must choose one of the two alternatives, first you must

".quench your swords with evil blood, and then quench your thirst next

Then, Ali (as) uttered a sentence which created much excitement among all of his followers. He asked them as to what life, or death meant, and said: "Is life just walking, eating, and sleeping? Is death the act of being buried under the earth? No, that is not life, and this is not death. Life is to die victoriously, and death is to live as .condemned, and vanquished

Ali's men advanced swiftly, and drove back Muawiah's army, which was now' deprived of water. Muawiah wrote to 'Ali begging for access to water, but 'Ali's companions were opposed to it. 'Ali (as), however, was acting chivalrous, and said that they must not prevent the enemy from accessing water, by creating difficulties for it. Winning victory in such a way would be unmanly, and unworthy of him as a Muslim. Thus, he showed that manliness and magnanimity are loftier than vainglory. Rumi, in his poem, calls 'Ali the lion of God, in courage, but he says no one can '.perceive Ali's magnanimity

Then, we find 'Ali at a different scene, and in a different garment when he is free from public duties, and is engaged

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in his devotion and worship, and utters the following prayer: "O God, you are a greater companion for your saints than any friend. You are willing than anyone to aid those who trust you. You observe the innermost thoughts, and secrets of your friends, and lovers, and are well aware of their insight, and knowledge, and know that their hearts ".beat and long for you

You should listen to, or, read the Du'a-e-Kumayl, which is 'Ali's supplication, and, in content, it surmounts to the height of mysticism. There is something in it beyond the two worlds; physical, and metaphysical. It shows solely the relation of a sincere, humble, and loving servant to the holy essence of providence (God). The way Imam 'Ali (as), and Imam Zain al –Abideen (as) commune with God at the dawn in the month of Ramadhan, shows us how to approach God as our first step; then, perform our

.selfish duties. We should abstain from self-indulgent inclinations

Imam as-Sadiq (as), just moments before passing away, summoned his kith and kin, and uttered one sentence before breathing his last. He said: "Our intercession does not apply to those who take prayer as trifle."

The life story of 'Ali (as), may be divided into six phases: the most amazing being the last one. The first period is from his birth to the open declaration by the Prophet about Islam. The second period is from the Prophet's ordainment to his Emigration to Medina. The third period, different from the

other two, is from the Emigration to Medina to the death of the Prophet. The fourth phase is from the Prophet's death to 'Ali's own Caliphate, a period of twenty-five years. The fifth phase is his four, and a half years of Caliphate. And the sixth, or, the last phase is of only two days from his receiving a sword strike on his head, until his martyrdom.

The last phase is the most amazing of all because 'Ali shows his perfection as a human being in the way he faced death. On receiving the strike, he uttered two sentences, namely: "Get hold of the man", and "I swear by the God of the Kaaba that I have received my salvation through martyrdom."

A physician, called Assad-bin-Amr, was brought to him, and he diagnosed that poison had pervaded 'Ali's blood. He said that he could do nothing, and recommended that the Imam should pronounce his last will. When Umm Kulthum, Imam Ali's daughter, saw ibn Muljam, she spoke harshly to him, and asked as to why he had acted thus towards her father, and expressed the hope that 'Ali (as) would recover. The cursed man said: "Have no hope, for I have bought this sword for a thousand dinars, and paid another thousand for smearing it with poison. The poison is so potent that it will not only kill your father; it could kill all the people of Kufa if used against them."

They brought 'Ali (as) some milk, and he told

those around to treat the assassin kindly. Then, he addressed his kith and kin, and said: "O! descendants of Abdul Muttalib, after my death do not go among people saying what has happened to me and accusing such and such a man. No, my assassin ".is only one man

He then said to his son Imam Hassan: "My son, this man has given your father only one stroke of the sword. After me, you have the choice either to set him free, or, punish him. If you choose to punish him, deliver him only one blow whether it kills him, or, not." Then, he asked if they have fed, and treated the assassin well. That is how he treated his enemy, and that is why Rumi, in his poem, calls him the lion of God, and .says no one can perceive the extent of Ali's magnanimity

All this shows 'Ali's manhood, and humanistic approach. The poison was affecting him profusely, and his companions are weeping, and groaning; but, they saw his smirk, and lips uttering this sentence: "I swear to God that what has happened to me is not reproach, this death, and martyrdom in the way of God is something for which I had longed all my life, and so much the better that it has happened during the act of devotion." Then, 'Ali used a simile that is well known among the Arabs. The desert Arabs were in the habit of staying where there was grass, and when

it had withered, they moved elsewhere. In hot weather, they sought a place at night where water could be found. He said: "I am like a lover who has found his beloved, or ."like one looking for water on a dark night, and is overjoyed to find it

In those last moments, they were all around 'Ali's bed. Poison had done its lethal damage, and from time to time 'Ali (as) fell into oblivion, and whenever he opened his eyes, he preached to those present. His last words which were fiery contained a twenty-point address directed first at his sons, Hassan and Husayn, and then at his other children, and finally at all people who may hear his words until the day of .Resurrection

Generally, everyone who has pioneered a school of thought has a theory about man's perfection, or, ideal of a perfect man. Ethics is related to “what should be”, and not “what is”, and once a man may acquire these ethical qualities, he will attain the peak of humanism. The views of various schools in connection with perfect man may be :summarized as under

One view is from intellectualists who view man in terms of his mental qualities, and (۱ think that his essence is his mind, and his faculty of thought. This is the view of ancient philosophers including Avicenna. For them, a perfect man was a sage, and his perfection lay in his philosophy. By theoretical philosophy, they meant the proper general understanding of

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the whole existence, and that is different from science, which means understanding .(only a fraction of entire existence (property

To show the difference between science and philosophy, the following explanation may elaborate the issue. You might wish to know something about a city. This knowledge may be general, or, specific. A municipal engineer can draw the plan of the city to show its limits, and divisions into various precincts, parks, streets, and squares, in which you would not be able to locate your house. Another man can supply all the local information of a precinct, which a general engineer cannot. A philosopher gives you a plan, and picture of the whole existence in general, and tries to find its origin and cause, its beginning and end, and its phases, and general principles. If you ask this man something about a plant, an animal, a stone, a star, or the sun, he may not be able to answer your question. For the philosopher, the picture of universe as a .whole is significant even though the details may be vague, or even unknown

To intellectualists, finding the general broad picture was the goal, and its attainment the sign of perfection, in which the world of intellect corresponds with the objective world. They thought this was possible through the use of reasoning, logic, and :reflection. They believed in two types of philosophy

a) The Theoretical philosophy, or, understanding the world as it is, and

b) The Practical philosophy which meant the complete predominance of

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.human intellect over all of his instincts, and other faculties

Books of ethics judge matters on this basis, and our ethics is a Socratic one based on intellect. Does your intellect dominate your passion, or, vice versa? Does your intellect dominate your anger, and fear, or vice versa? Thus, if you can manage to understand the world through reasoning, and allow your intellect to dominate "the self", then you .are a perfect man

Another school is the school of love, or, Gnosticism. By love is meant affectionate (۲ devotion to God. Unlike the intellectual school which is the school of reflection in which all actions are intellectual, the school of love is all action, a vertical rather than a horizontal motion, though at a later stage it assumes a horizontal direction. At first it is an upward flight towards God. They do not believe in logical reasoning as the means of advancement; it is the spirit of man that overcomes one until it reaches God. It berates the school of intellect, and this subject is the basis of one of the finest debates in literature between love, and intellect, and those who are engaged in such discussions are themselves mostly Gnostics who have given love victory over intellect. This school considers intellect as a trivial part of man's existence, and only a means to an end, whereas the essence of man is his spirit, which belongs to the world of love involving nothing, but moving towards God. That is why

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the followers of this school, such as the poet Hafiz, prefer love, and its intoxication .over intellect

Their monotheism is based on the unity of existence, which takes the form of absolute truth once a human being understands that position. It means that a perfect man .becomes ultimately a part of God, or, having godly attributes

Another school of thought thinks of perfect man depending neither on intellect, nor, (۳ on love, but on power, meaning thereby force, strength, or, something similar. In ancient Greece, there was a group called Sophists who explicitly claimed that might was right, and weakness meant absence of right. Thus, justice, and injustice had no meaning for them, since might is right, and every human being endeavoured to gain .power without any condition, or, limitation

In the last two centuries, this idea was revived by Nietzche, the German philosopher. He, and his followers say truth, honesty, and goodness are all nonsense. If a person is weak, it is his own fault, and he deserves to be vanquished. He believes religion is invented by the weak, being himself is opposed to religion. Note this is opposite to Karl Marx's view that religion is invented by the strong to enslave the weak. Nietzche thinks the weak have invented religion to limit the power of the strong, and the treachery of religion to mankind has been to propagate such ideas as generosity, kindness, humanity, and justice etc. among the people, and this has deceived the strong into diminishing their

.power for the sake of humanity

He (Nietzche) thinks those who say that 'one should combat the self' are wrong; rather, the self should be nourished. Those who speak of equality are wrong; there should always be inferiors working for the superiors in order to enable them to grow, and produce “the superman”. He is against the equality of the sexes because the male is created as the stronger sex, and the female is to serve the male. Thus, this school thinks superman, or, the perfect man to be at par with a strong, and powerful man, .and perfection means power

Such ideas have consciously, or, otherwise subconsciously become prevalent among the Muslims, and sometimes we carelessly speak of life as the "survival of the fittest," whereas this phrase means that defence of right, and truth is ignored (might is right attitudes). Without such a war, no priest, monk, or, clergy could peacefully engage in worship in churches, temples, or, mosques; and they should all be thankful to the

.soldier who makes this worship possible

It would be great for mankind to reach a stage of education, and perfection where no assault on humanity would exist, and no legitimate war would be needed. Islam presents such a society in the form of the rule of Mahdi, the awaited Imam (as). It is said that then even wild beasts will be reconciled with one another, and there will exist .no aggression amongst the living beings

A sentence is alluded to Imam

Husayn (as), which is neither correct, nor, verified as having been uttered by him. This sentence has become prevalent in the last fifty years, and it is: "One should fight a jihad for the sake of one's opinion". Such a sentence is in agreement with Western ideas, while the Holy Qur’an says that a jihad must be waged in the way of right, and .truth

A belief may be right, or, wrong. Another school of thought says that one should have a belief, and an ideal for which one must put in efforts, no matter what that belief is. But the Holy Qur’an says these efforts must be made in the way of right, and if the belief proves to be wrong, it must be reformed. Often, it is necessary to combat one's own belief to discover the truth, and then begin combat in the way of truth. The idea of the "survival of the fittest" is the basis of the supposition that "might is right", an .idea derived from Darwin's philosophy about animal life, and applied to human life

But, we cannot consider human beings to be at the same level with animals with regard to the fact that war is the only way of survival. If this is so, what could be said about co-operation, unity, sincerity, and affection among human beings? They may say these acts, and sentiments, too, are for survival, and are imposed on human beings by a superior enemy. It is a necessity to have

these elements to face a stronger enemy, the proof of this is that no sooner the

enemy is removed, than unity turns into dispersion, and differences and disputes .arise among them even when there are only two individuals left

As the schools of intellectualists, and love meet with opposition, the school of might is faced with those who negate it, and say that man's perfection lies in his weakness, and not in his strength for when he has power, he will show aggression. Sa'di, the :poet, has made the same mistake by saying

,I am the ant that is trampled on"

.And not the wasp to make others groan with the pain of my sting

How can I express my thanks for this blessing

(That I have no strength to hurt people."(۱

Reasonably, the fact whether one be an ant, or, a wasp is not the reason one should get hurt, or, hurt the other. One should be thankful to have strength and having the sense to not hurt others. Sa'di speaks also of an ascetic who had retired to a cave, and when he was asked as to why he did not live in the town among people, he answered: "There are too many elegant, and pretty ones, and an old man slips on an ".abundance of flowers

Sa'di also expresses the opposite view in another poem describing the difference between an ascetic, and a man of learning, and says an ascetic wants to save his own skin, whereas a man of

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.Sa'di's "Golestan", Chapter ۳, Story I -۱

.learning tries to save a drowning man

:The Holy Qur'an speaks, in Chapter "Yusuf" which is called "The Best Story", of him

,(Who guards against evil and is patient,"(Sura Yusuf, ۱۲:۹۰"

meaning Yusuf who, in spite of all the available resources for seeking pleasure, controls himself, and guards his chastity. He is threatened with death if he does not :yield to lustfulness, but he says in the same Chapter

My Lord! The prison house is dearer to me than that where they invite me to; and if" Thou turn not away their device from me, I will yearn towards them." (Sura Yusuf, .(۱۲:۳۳

This proves that man's perfection does not lie in his weakness, even though the opposite view is expressed in many of our poems. For example, Baba Taher Hamadani says: "Help me against the eye, and the heart, for, what the eye sees, the heart desires. I must make a dagger with a steel blade, to hit the eye in order to ".liberate the heart

This poet should also have hit his ears so as not to desire what he hears! What an example of a perfect man who cannot control himself except by getting rid of his !organs and limbs

We have many examples of such weakness, and abject sense of morality in literature, but we should remember that human beings are prone to err, and go to excess. When we compare other schools of thought with the genuine Islam, we realize that Islam must have come from God. Socrates

concentrates on one aspect of man while each one of Plato, Avicenna, Mohyedin Arabi, and foreign scholars stress other specific aspects. But, all of them are led astray. If so, then how can a prophet rely only on his human brain, and produce such a fine, progressive and comprehensive school of thought? All those thinkers are minor .compared with him, and he is their teacher who speaks last, and best

There is another school of thought about a perfect man that is based on love, and self-realization. This school dates back to several thousand years, and has produced lofty ideas in ancient Indian books, some of which have also been translated into

Persian, such as Upanishads. The great scholar Tabatabai who had read this book was greatly impressed by its lofty thoughts. In this school, self-realization is the basis of all human accomplishments. Socrates (presumably of prophetic origin), and various .prophets as well as the Prophets of Islam express this point

But this school concentrates on the above single point only. Gandhi's collection of essays, and letters called 'This is my faith", is a fine book in which he says: "I discovered three principles by the study of Upanishads, which have been my guide in life: firstly, there is only one reality, and that is to know the self. This is the point by which he criticizes the West, and says those in the west have understood the world, but not discerned themselves, and for this reason they have brought

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.misfortune upon themselves, and the world

Secondly, he who understands himself will understand God, and others. Thirdly, there exists only one power, the power of dominating oneself. If one can dominate oneself, it would be possible for him to dominate everything else. Gandhi also says there is one goodness, and that is to desire for others what one desires for oneself. Indian philosophy is based on self-realization, contemplation, and renunciation of desires, .and discovery of one's reality, which, in turn, produces affection

In modern times, that is, in the last three centuries, a number of schools of thought have appeared which have a social tendency. One school considers a perfect man as a classless individual, and believes that belonging to a class, particularly a high class, is the sign of being imperfect, whereas perfection means equality with others. Another school like existentialism, emphasizes liberty, social awareness, and responsibilities. Another school agrees with this, but says that being quarrelsome is a .requisite for this attitude

Another school believes in enjoyment, a school that is somewhat close to the school of might. It says that one should get maximum benefit out of the blessings of creation to attain perfection. Those who consider knowledge as the height of perfection desire

it in order to know nature, and thereby dominate it to serve mankind. Thus, for them knowledge is a means, not an end. Such people belong to the school of maximum .enjoyment

These were the various views that have been expressed about a

perfect man, and we will elaborately describe the views of Islam in this connection, and show the relative value of Intellect, might, social responsibilities etc. in it. Another manifestation of man's perfection is the way he faces death, because the fear of death is a weak point in man which produces many miseries, and submission to much .cruelty

If there is no fear of death, the whole life will be transformed. The magnanimous men are those who face death bravely, or, even seek it casually, not a death which is suicide, but one which is for a goal to attain which they feel to have a mission, and responsibility. Suicide means abandoning responsibility, while death for the sake of duty is happiness. This kind of death is welcomed only by saints for whom death is nothing other than a continuation of abode, or, as Imam Husayn says "It is like crossing a bridge to reach a place which is inconceivable." It is reported that when he .was being beheaded, he had a smile on his lips

Such men have both a great power of attraction, and repulsion; they have very loyal friends as well as wicked enemies that knowingly oppose the truth. The noble Imams .of Islam were such perfect men, and models for their society

Thus, man is the only creature who can separate "self" from himself, whereas stones, plants, and other living creatures are unable to remove from themselves the qualities given to them in creation. But man

should acquire his humanity, which has nothing to do with his biological aspects. As Sa'di says: "Man’s body is ennobled by his soul, and this fine garment is not a sign of

":humanity

Being born a human being does not make him human. He has the potentiality of being human in the same way that he has the potentiality of being a learned man. A biologist, or, a physician is not the only reason to show this humanity to us. It is something which is not denied even by the most materialistic school of thought, and .yet there in no material criteria for it

We begin the discussion with the school of intellect. According to ancient philosophers, the essence of man is his intellect. As man's body is not a part of his personality. His spiritual and psychological peculiarities, too, are not a part of his true personality. Only his power of thinking is the measure of that personality. What he sees is nothing but a tool, and a means for his thought; so are his desires. A perfect man is he who has attained perfection in reflection, and has understood the world of existence as it is. According to this school, intellect is capable of discerning the reality of the world, and can, like a mirror, truly reflect that reality in itself. Islamic philosophers who accept .this view believe that this is the Islamic faith, which is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an

To them, it means understanding the

universe, its origin, and processes, its system, the direction of its return, faith in God, and angels as the steps of existence, faith in the world as a created thing, faith in the idea that God has not left the world to itself but guides it through prophets, and faith in the fact that everything has come from God, and returns to Him, namely Resurrection. These Philosophers consider this discernment to be philosophical and .general, and not a scientific one which is a partial understanding

The schools that have opposed the intellectual school are the Illuminati, or, the Platonian philosophers, and the Gnostics; the school of love, and the school of traditions, and annals. In modern times, and in the last four centuries, the school of love has risen against the school of intellect, and it claims that intellect is in the service of the senses, and can only make use of the product of the senses, like a factory

turning raw materials into some substance or object. Nevertheless, the intellectual school holds its own ground against various onslaughts.

Let us see how the school of intellect compares with the view of Islam. The first point is the validity, and genuineness of intellectual understanding. Many schools deny this validity for intellect. In Islamic texts, however, we come across an extraordinary support of intellect, which is not seen in any other religion. Compare Islam with Christianity, and you will see that Christianity gives intellect no right to interfere in matters related

to faith, and it is the duty of the clergy to check every reflection, and reasoning in the question of faith.

Islam, on the contrary, believes that nothing but intellect has the right to interfere in religion, For example, when you are asked as to how you came to believe in the first principle which is monotheism, your answer must only be that it was through intellect. If your reason is based on imitating the elders, or, following the example of others, such a belief is not acceptable, because it should only come through reasoning.

The Holy Qur’an constantly speaks of reasoning. Annals and traditions, too, consider intellect to be great importance, so much so that the first chapter of such books is devoted to intellect. Imam Musa ibn Jafar (as) says that God has sent two signs for man, the internal messenger, which is man's intellect, and the external prophet, which means those men who, are to guide human beings. These two complement one another, and without them man cannot attain happiness. Sometimes, it is said that a wise man’s sleep is worthier than an ignorant man's worship, and the former's refraining from fasting is better than the latter's fasting; and his remaining stationary is wiser than the latter's movement. No prophet was ever ordained by God before he was granted intelligence. We consider our Prophet as having divine wisdom, and this is in contrast with Christian belief in which the intellect, and religion are quite apart.

From the

viewpoint of philosophers, the essence of man is his intellect, and all other things such the senses, memory, imagination, talents, and aptitude are tools, and the means for that intellect. Islam does not confirm this point, but says that intellect is one of the branches of man's existence, and not the whole of it. The idea of philosophers, who declare that faith is limited to only understanding, does not correspond with what Islam says. In Islam, faith is a reality which is more than mere understanding. It is also .inclination, submission, humility, and love

An astronomer knows the stars, but he has no love, and inclination for them. A mineralogist does not necessarily have a feeling for mines, and minerals. A person may have the knowledge of something, and dislike it at the same time. In politics very often one knows one's enemy better than oneself. For example, in Israel there may be individuals who know the Arabs, and Muslims better than the Arabs and Muslims know themselves. In the same way in Egypt, or, Arabia, there may be specialists on Israel. But do these specialists also have an inclination towards the country of their .study? Often, this knowledge is combined with hatred

The Holy Qur’an gives the best examples of those who know God, the prophet, and the basic principles of religion highly, and yet they are pagans and infidels. Does Satan not know God, yet, act against God? He knows God better than any other creature, and has

worshipped Him for thousands of years, as Satan was an angel for thousands of years in the company of other angels? He knows the prophets too, and is well aware .(of Resurrection, and hereafter. Yet, the Holy Qur’an calls him an unbeliever(۱

If what the philosophers say about understanding were true, Satan would then be the .top believer. But he is not, and opposes the truth that he knows so well

:The Holy Qur’an says

,I swear by the fig and olive"(١

,And Mount Sinai (٢

,And this city made secure (٣

.Certainly we created man in the best make (۴

.Then we rendered him the lowest of the low (۵

.(Except those who believe and do good. (Sura at-Tin, ٩۵:١-۶ (۶

.The Verses ١ to ۵ are the basis of theoretical wisdom and Verse ۶ is practical wisdom

:So far, three points have been explained in connection with the school of intellect

.Intellect is the basis, its perceptions are reliable, and it can secure true knowledge (١

.Intellect is not the whole of human essence, and Islam does not confirm it as such (٢

.What is called Islamic faith is the perception of intellect or understanding (٣

But what is important is that faith is preliminary to action, and has no genuineness of its own, and this, in turn, brings two schools of thought face to face. What is meant by the genuineness of faith? Is it because faith is the basis of human deed, and one should constantly strive

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.Sura Sad, ٣٨:٧۴ -١

according to a plan, and for a goal, using faith as its foundation? For, activity is inherent in man's nature, and this requires a basis of thought, and belief, a matter which can be compared to building a one-room house as a goal, and all other acts, or, things, or, parts such as the base and walls etc. are inevitable to that goal.

In today's social schools, such as communism, a set of views, and beliefs exist which is

based on materialism (hence limited in scope). There also exists a series of social, political, economic, and moral principles, which are considered as the foundation, but not the goal. Materialism cannot be considered as a goal for a communist. This inclination was due to a silly conflict of the church with such social and political thoughts, and especially with freedom, so that this view became prevalent in Europe that man must be free, and have a right in society, and forget God, or, believe in God, and forsake the right, and liberty. Thus, in order to find a solution, they rejected religion as a foundation. A communist thinks wrongly that without materialism, no .social, political, and economic principles can be explained

Recently a number of communists who say that materialism is not a necessity, and communism could be had without materialism have appeared in the world. For them faith in those mental principles has no genuineness of its own, and these are used only as a basis of world vision on

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.which they can build up their school

In Islam there is faith in God, angels, prophets, Imams, and Resurrection, but do these faiths figure only as the basis of thought and belief without being genuine in itself? No, this is not true. In Islam while faith is the foundation of thought, and belief, and Islamic ideology is built on them, this foundation has a genuineness of its own, and here philosophers are right in thinking that faith has its own authenticity. If its value is for action, then action without faith is nothing at all. Faith is one pillar of happiness, and action is another. In Islam the perfection of man in this world, and especially the hereafter, depends on his faith, for, in Islam the spirit is actually .independent

The spirit has its own perfection, and is eternal, if it does not attain perfection, it is :deficient and cannot secure happiness. The Holy Qur'an says

And whoever is blind in this world, he shall (also) be blind in the hereafter; and more" .(erring from this way." (Sura al-Isra', ۱۷:۷۲

Here, blindness does not meant physical blindness, but figuratively, the spiritual blindness, which prevents man from discerning truth, and having faith in it. If someone performs even all the good deeds possible in this world, enjoys the good and forbids the evil, and lives like an ascetic, and devotes his life to the service of mankind, but at the same time he does not understand God, and Resurrection, and this

world of temporary existence, he is undoubtedly blind here, and will also be blind in :hereafter. The Holy Qur’an says

He shall say: My Lord! Why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one" indeed? He will say: Even so: Our communications came to you, but you neglected .(them; even thus shall you be forsaken this day" (Sura Ta Ha, ۲۰:۱۲۵-۱۲۶

Nahjul-Balagha asserts the genuineness of faith, and says about men of God that when they call on God, and beg forgiveness, they feel within themselves the breeze of salvation, and there are people in every era who have communion with God, Fakhr Razi says in a quatrain; "I fear that I may pass away without having truly understood ".the world, and without going out of my physical being into my spiritual existence

In Islam, knowing God, and knowing angels as the media of the world of existence, and knowing prophets and saints who are, in another respect, the media of God's blessing to us, and the knowledge of the reason for our coming to this world, where we are going to, and of our ultimate return to God like every other created thing, all these understandings are genuine, and, at the same time, they are the basis of .Islamic ideology

Therefore, neither faith should be sacrificed for our actions, nor, the actions for the faith. Consequently, it can be said that the perfect man of philosophers, on the whole, is not perfect, for, he possesses a partial

perfection by seeking that perfection only in his intellect. Such a man is full of knowledge attained through limited capacity of human sense(s), but without yearning, .zeal and motion

In Gnosticism, knowledge, and intellect have been much scorned. Islam while accepting the concept of love does not scorn intellect, reasoning, and logic. That is why in later periods of Islam, there appeared a group that respected both love, and intellect. Sheikh Shahabeddin Sohrverdi, from the Sect of Illuminati, is one of them, and to a greater extent Mulla Sadra Shirazi who thinks this way of love, and intellect must follow the Holy Qur'an, and has no desire to scorn the concept of love like .Avicenna, or, Sufis who look down upon intellect

Another issue found in Gnosticism, but, is unacceptable to Islam, is that its introvert nature dominates its extrovert side, and its individualistic aspect almost obliterates/overshadows the social side. In Gnosticism, a perfect man is engaged with his own self, and that is "the self" is everything. But in Islam, in addition to love, righteousness, self-purification, and spirituality, a perfect man is also an extrovert, .and sociable

The companions of Imam Mahdi (as) are said to be devout worshipers at night, and :like lions during the day, The Holy Qur'an speaks of both aspects

They who turn (to Allah), who serve (Him), who praise (Him), who fast, who bow" down, who prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and who keep the limits of

.(Allah; and give good news to the believers." (Sura at-Tawbah, ۹:۱۱۲

In this Verse, the points mentioned up to the subject of prostration are internal acts of .devotion, and the remainder of the Verse is related to social duties

:The Holy Qur'an refers to similar matters

Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the" unbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allah and pleasure; their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration; that is their description in the Old Testament and their description in the New Testament; like as seed produce that puts forth its sprout, then strengthens it, so it becomes stout and stands firmly on its stem, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the unbelievers on account of them; Allah has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great (reward." (Sura al-Fath, ۴۸:۲۹

In this Verse, the first part speaks of the social side of the Prophet, and his companions, while the next part refers to acts of worship, and devotion. But in this devotion, they are trying to win God's satisfaction which is the highest priority for .them

This devotion to win God's satisfaction is extravagantly seen in "the perfect man" of the Sufis. Some Gnostic leaders who have been deeply influenced by Islamic teachings, and have often pointed it out observe this weak point. And yet there has ,been an excess of introversion

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.so that extroversion has been effaced

There is another aspect and that is mortifying the self, by which is meant purification, and avoiding selfishness, and narcissism, but the Gnostics, in emphasizing these things, have forgotten the positive aspect of purification which is magnanimity, and qualities that are beyond materialism, and biology, that is, non-material human .values

Without a survey, and analysis of various schools of thought, we cannot fathom the depth of Islamic views in this connection. We mentioned before that the Gnostics have scorned the intellect, and have exalted love to a position much higher than intellect, but it is an exorbitant approach to consider reflection, reasoning and logic as

.insignificant

It is said that Avicenna who lived in late fourth century, and the beginning of the fifth century of Hijrah, and was a great Philosopher of the intellectual school, was a contemporary of a very distinguished Gnostic called Abu-Sa'id Abol-kheyr. Avicenna lived in the Transoxania region of Balkh and Bokhara, but after refusing Sultan Mahmood's invitation to join his court, he fled in fear to Neishapur where he met Abu-Sai'd. It is narrated that these two retired into closed door meetings, together for three days to discuss their views, and came out of their one-on-one meeting only for the purpose of offering congregational prayer. After this visit, Avicenna was asked about his impression of Abu- Sa'id, and he said: "He sees what we know." And, when Abu-Sa'id was asked about Avicenna, he said: "This blind man follows

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with his stick the way we see and follow", an answer which shows contempt for .intellect

What we say is that if we place the view of the Holy Qur'an on one side, and the Gnostic view of intellect on the other, we would realize that they are incompatible. The Holy Qur'an attributes a great worth and respect for intellect, reflection, and .even pure intellectual reasoning as compared to Gnosticism

Imam 'Ali (as) is considered as the fulcrum of Gnosticism by all groups, and sects of Shi'a and Sunni (about seventy sects in number), and only one group follows Abu-Bakr. In Nahjul Balagha" 'Ali (as) has, according to Ibn-Abil-Hadid, expressed the gist of Gnosticism in just four lines whereas all Gnostics have discussed this in so many books. But, the same 'Ali elsewhere expresses as a philosopher whose reasoning no philosopher can rival. Thus, the perfect man of Islam differs from the perfect man of Gnosticism in its growth of intellect. Another view of Gnosticism is that what one wishes to offer others should be from within the self. For them to become perfect, one should purify oneself, pay attention to God only, and to nothing else, retire within oneself, and sever one's relations with external things. Thus, they attribute no importance to debating, and logical reasoning, as Rumi, the poet, says. "The leg of a

:reason is wooden, and a wooden leg is very unruly." Elsewhere he says

If an intellectual discussion is pearl and coral"

Something else the

p: ٧٠

;essence of life

Talk of life is in a different rank

"And the wine of life is of a different order

What was the end of the road for the philosopher? It was to be a world of thought and .reflection, a mirror in which to see the world

What is the end of the road for the mystic? To reach God by self-purification, and love, .and travel the course under the care of a more perfect being

:The Holy Qur'an says

O man! Surely you must strive (to attain) to your Lord, a hard striving until you meet" .(Him." (Sura al-Inshiqaq, ٨۴: ۶

It means that after attaining Him, you will have total contentment,. It is puzzling is that after attaining that rank, one desires nothing but God's grace. Abu-Sa'id says in a :quatrain

?What can one do with life after knowing you"

?What can he do with a wife, children and household

.You turn him crazy, and grant him both the worlds

"?What does one need for both worlds, when one is mad only for you

The above points show what a perfect man is from the perspective of Gnostics: that

when he attains God, he becomes His perfect manifestation, and a mirror of His :essence. What does Islam think of self-purification? The Holy Qur'an says

He will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it... "" .((Sura ash-Shams, ۹۱:۹- ۱۰

Is self-purification in Islam the way of knowing God, or, is the recognition of

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God possible through reflection, and reasoning? Concerning self-purification, a sentence of the Prophet is quoted by both Shi 'as and Sunnis, that is, if anyone can purify himself for God for forty days, i.e. if he regards God's satisfaction as the only worthy thing, and abandons all desires, he will become a man like Abraham, of whom :the Holy Qur'an says

Say: indeed my prayer, my devotion, my life, and death are all for God."(Sura al-" .(An'am, ۶:۱۶۲

Thus, a knowledge that springs from within is acceptable to Islam. God says to Moses (in the Holy Qur'an:(۱

Then they found one from among our servants whom we had granted mercy from" .(us, and whom we had taught knowledge from ourselves."(Sura al-Kahf, ۱۸:۶۵

Moreover, the Prophet is quoted: "Is it not true that devils move round the hearts of Adam's sons, and create dust, and gloom whereas Adam's sons could see the angels with their heart's eye." And, again the Prophet says: "If it had not been for your talkativeness, and if it had not been for your heart which is like a pasture in which (every animal grazes, you would be able to see what I see and hear what I hear."(۲

Thus, it is not necessary to be a prophet to see, and hear. Many could do so; like 'Ali (as). He was ten years old when he accompanied the Prophet (saw) to the temple, and the cave of Hirra, and when revelation came to Muhammad (saw) for the first time which

.This is said to be Khaja Khidhr who by a miracle is still alive -۱
.Me'raj-Sa'ada p.۱۱ -۲

carried him into a trance, 'Ali, too, could hear the sounds from the occult. He says: "I told the Prophet that when revelation came I could hear the groans of Satan." The Prophet said: "O 'Ali, you can hear what I hear, and see what I see, even though you (are not a prophet."(۱

In this way, the only effect of self-purification is not only to purify the heart, but sincerely remove carnal desires, and its greater result is to produce knowledge, and wisdom from within. It is narrated that one day the companions of the holy Apostle said to him: "We fear to be hypocrites." They were true believers, yet, they felt this anxiety. The Prophet asked the reason. They said: "When we come before you, and you preach of God, resurrection and sin, we have a deep feeling of penitence that is so pleasant. But, when we leave you, and go back to our family, we find ourselves as we had been before. Is this not hypocrisy" The Prophet answered: "No, this is not hypocrisy which is the act of being double-faced. What you describe is about two conditions of the mind, when it is downcast." Then he continued: "If you remain in the same state as when you are with me, then the angels will shake hands with you, and if ".it becomes a habit with you, you can walk on water without being drowned

Our Gnostic literature which is considered to be among the masterpieces

.Utterance ۲۲۰. p.۳۳۷ -۱

of the world, owes everything to Islam, All the delicacy that you find in the works of Rumi, Hafiz, Sa'di and Naser Khosrawi is derived from Islam. Hafiz says explicitly that he owes everything to the Holy Qur'an. Sa'di says something similar in the story of Jacob and Joseph. When Joseph made himself known as a successor of his father, Jacob, in the line of prophet hood to his brothers in Egypt, he gave his shirt to his

brothers to carry to his father who had gone blind with the sorrow of separation from :his dearest son. According to the Holy Qur'an, Jacob on taking the shirt said

Most surely I perceive the greatness of Yusuf, unless you pronounce me to be weak" .(in judgment, " (Sura Yusuf, ۱۲:۹۴

Sa'di in his poem says; "Someone asked that man who had lost his son, O wise old man of sound judgment, You got the scent of his shirt from Egypt; How was it that you could not know of his fall into the well?" He answered: "Our condition is like lightning, One moment it appears, and then it is gone. If the humble man stays in his own place, ".He would be exalted in both worlds

To confirm the above points, the following passage is quoted from 'Ali's utterance from Nahjul-Balagha(۱) speaking of a mystic wayfarer: "He has revived his intellect, and killed his passion, so that divine asceticism has made him delicate, and the coarseness of the spirit is

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.Nahjul-Balagha. Semon ۱۹۰ -۱

changed into tenderness. In this condition, a spark strikes out of his interior, and illuminates his way, and he follows it until he reaches his destination which is his safety, and permanent dwelling, and his ultimate goal." Thus, a perfect man should .have purified his "self" first

Islam says that a wayfarer of humanity holds an exalted position in having covered various stages of journey, and reaching a place where there no longer stands a veil between him, and God. He sees Him with the heart's eye, and he no longer requires any outward manifestations such as the sky, the earth, the nature, and the leaves of trees etc., in order to discover God. Someone asked Imam 'Ali (as) if he had seen God. He answered; "I never worship a God that I have not seen. But, this act of seeing is not with the eye (physical), or, in a certain direction, but, with the heart, and in all ".directions

However, there are some matters in the school of Gnosticism, which are scorned, for being in agreement with Islam's views, and for this reason the perfect man of Gnosticism is half-perfect. The views of the Gnostics in this connection are more important for us than those of philosophers, such as Aristotle, and Avicenna, since the views of the latter are mostly confined to their books, and have not become prevalent among people. Whereas those of mystics, both in prose, and poetry, and in the form of parables, have influenced public

.thought greatly

Such school of Gnosticism offers a number of ideas acceptable to Islam, while in other respects it is open to criticism, and its perfect man of Islam. The Gnostics, unlike philosophers, do not consider intellect as a criterion of man, but only as a means, that the real ego is related to the heart, not for the physical body, but the centre of sentiments, and to whatever is desired by intellect. A mystic attributes much importance to love, and emotion which are the strongest in the man; his love is not a sexual one, but a love that rises high until it attains God who is his beloved. He also believes that this love is not confined to man, but exists in all creatures, and in all products (creation). Rumi compares this love to an ocean over which all nature, and all skies, and the heavens are like foam. Hafiz says in a poem: "We have not come to this ,door for rank, and glory

.We have taken refuge here from misfortune

,We are wayfarers of love from non-existence

."And, we have come so far to the realm of existence

The last two lines are almost a translation of a sentence uttered by Imam Sajjad, the fourth Imam, in praise of God who created the world, and roused it to love God. Thus, .for a Gnostic the ego is what shows love, not what shows contemplation

,For a philosopher, a man can reach perfection by means of logic, deduction

reasoning, and reflection, whereas for the Gnostic, the speech, and the knowledge are of no avail, but a pure heart is required, a heart which is purified from all vices, to turn to God, and drive out the devil form the heart to make room for the angel which is :the light of God. Hafiz says in this connection

.I intend if it is at all possible, to do something to end my sorrow"

The privacy of the heart is not for strangers; once the devil goes out the angel comes .in

,Talk of precepts is for the darkness of the longest night

Seek the light from the sun, and beg it to come out, why sit at the door of the ungenerous masters of the world? How long do you wait for the master to come out? Do not abandon mendicancy if you wish to find treasure, by following the wayfarer ".who comes forth

Gnosticism is a school of introversion in which the heart is greater than the world, even if one side is placed the whole universe, on the other, the heart which is, according to the Holy Qur'an, the divine spirit breathed into man(۱). They call the world the 'small man', and the heart "the great man", or, the small, and the big world, ;Rumi says

,If you are Adam's offspring, stay like him, and see all particles within yourself"

?What is in the vat that is not in the stream

What is in the house that is not in

.Sura al-Hijir, ۱۵:۲۹ -۱

?the town

'This world is the vat and the heart is the stream

".This world is a room and the heart a wonderful city

Gnosticism negates extroversion and believes that the attainment of God must be :from within. Hafiz says in another poem

,For long the heart desired Jamshid's Cup"

,And begged from strangers what it had itself

,It sought from the lost ones at the seashore

.A pearl which was out of the shell of existence

.A lovesick man had God with him at all times

,Yet he saw Him not, and cried out: 'O, God

,Last night I took my problem to the Magi priest

?Who could solve it by his confirmation

"?I asked: "When was this Cosmorama Cup given you

,He said: "That day when He built the azure dome

And that follow who has risen up the gallows

".was guilty of revealing secrets

Rumi describes in a parable, a man who kept on begging God for some of the treasures which were hidden by so many people under the earth. One night he dreamt that someone came to him as God's messenger to show him the place of treasure. He pointed out a certain hill from the top of which the man should shot an arrow, and the treasure would be where the arrow fell. Next day, he found the hill, but he did not know what direction he should shoot at. He decided to shoot at some direction, but failed to find the treasure. Every day he tried

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a different direction, but his labour of digging the earth with a pickaxe, and spade .produced nothing

Another night the same fellow appeared in his dream, and the man complained to him for having given him wrong indications. The man was asked if he had found the hill, and he answered that he had, and spoke of having pulled the bowstring hard to let the arrow fly, the fellow said; "I never told you to draw the bowstring; I only said; "Let the ".arrow drop by itself

Next day, the man went there and put the arrow on the bow, and let it fall, and it fell at .his feet. He dug the earth at once and found the treasure

:Rumi concludes the story by saying

,God is nearer to you than the jugular vein"

.And, yet you shot your arrow afar

.You got your bow and arrow, and made yourself ready

".Your shot went afar, whereas the treasure was near

One of the recent learned priests said that he had heard the above story from a preacher who had mastered the "Mathnavi", but the priest did not know what it signified, and asked the priest its meaning. He answered it in one sentence, and said: "It is within yourself." Thus, the outside world as compared to the heart is scorned in Gnosticism, whereas the words attributed to Imam ‘Ali show that the world is the .major thing, and man is a minor one

If we compare the Gnostic view with

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the viewpoint of the Holy Qur’an, we find some positive aspects in it as well as

:deficiencies. The Holy Qur’an does not ignore nature and says

We will soon show them our signs in the universe and in their own souls, until it will" .(become quite clear to them that it is the truth."(Sura Fussilat, ۴۱:۵۳

Of course, we agree that the noblest enlightenment for man is within himself, but we .cannot disregard the outside nature as a manifestation of God

There is a very fine point that the Gnostic view has had a deeper influence on the public than philosophical ideas on account of their poetic delicacy, and warmth and beauty. The influence of Rumi’s, Hafiz’s and Sa'di’s thoughts is found in every home. That is the reason why we have devoted more space to this discussion than to the .school of philosophy

Part ۳: Relation of the Man with Nature

This is a problem in itself, as this is a relationship of two strangers with one another, and, may include, the relation of a prisoner with jail, or, a bird with its cage, and ?Joseph with the well

Someone may say that being born is being put in a prison, a cage, or, a well. If so, this relationship is one of two opposites, and the man's endeavour must be only to set .himself free from this prison and cage

But in Islam, the relation of man with nature resembles that of a farmer with the farm, of a merchant with the market, and

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of a devotee with the temple. For a farmer, land is not the goal but the means. His home is elsewhere but he uses the land to secure livelihood, and the means of comfort, and happiness. He ploughs it, scatters seeds, weeds it, harvests it, etc. The world is the farm of the hereafter, and this land should not be taken by a farmer for his permanent home. For a merchant, a market is a place of work in which he uses his .capital, and efforts to gain profit. This is how man should view the world

Someone came to Imam ‘Ali and began blaming the world since he had heard that the Imam did the same. He did not know that ‘Ali (as) reproached the worship of the world, which is contrary to the worship of God and truth, and in itself a negation of all human values. ‘Ali was angry at this, and said: "O the reproaching man, O you who are deceived, the world has not deceived you, but you have deceived yourself."(۱)

As an example, I may say that an old woman deceives a young man with her make-up, and her false teeth, and hair. The youth realizes suddenly that he has been deceived. Or, maybe the old woman comes forward, and admitting her deficiencies makes an offer for marriage. In that case, the woman has not deceived him; rather the young man has deceived himself,

Imam ‘Ali (as) said: "The world has not hidden anything

۱- Nahjul-Balagha, ۴۹۳.

from you to deceive you. Did the world deceive you on the day you buried your father? The world said: "I am what you see, and I have no stability, discern me the way as I am. Why do you suppose me to be what you wish, not what I really am?" So, the world deceives no one. Let us see whether the world has betrayed you, or, vice versa. It is you who follow your carnal desires." Then, ‘Ali added: "The world is the trade market of saints, and the mosque of God's friends."

The idea that the world is a prison, or, a cage, is based on a psychological view that has been prevalent in India, and in pre-Islamic Greece, but, it is unacceptable to Islam. It says that human spirit has been created in a perfect form in another world, and introduced, in a cage, to this world, in which case he has no alternative but to break the cage. But, the Holy Qur’an says:

"And certainly We created man of an extract of clay; then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting place; then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the

bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation" (Sura al-Mu'minun,۲۳:۱۲-۱۴).

The last sentence shows that man was made into something else, which is the spirit, and this spirit

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is produced from matter. Therefore, it has not been perfected elsewhere in order to be put in a cage here. Man lives in nature, like his mother's lap, and it is here that he undergoes evolution, and perfection. Islam says; if you do not rise higher from this natural position, you will remain here in the lowest of the low, and in the hell hereafter. The Holy Qur'an says:

"What is the terrible calamity! And what will make you comprehend what the terrible calamity is? The day on which men shall be as scattered moths, and the mountains shall be as loosened wool, then as for him whose measure of good deeds is heavy, he shall live a pleasant life. And as for him whose measure of good deeds is light, his abode shall be the abyss. And what will make you know what it is? A burning fire!' (Sura al-Qari'ah, ۱۰۱:۱-۱۱)).

Therefore, in the anthropology on Islam, and in the knowledge of the world, man has not been a ready-made bird which has flown in a holy space, and put in a cage, to make it necessary for him to break the cage. If you admit that the world of spirit has priority over the world of matter, and it is a beam illuminating this world from another world, you cannot believe that spirit has been elsewhere in a perfect form, and brought here to be imprisoned. Such an idea is historically Indian, and Platonic.

Plato of Greece believed that the

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spirit was created in another world, and was brought here for some reason, and put into confinement, to be released later, and return. But, Islam does not have such a belief.

We do not mean that all the Gnostics have erred so much in this connection. They have not ignored the significance of society, or, nature, and as the Holy Qur'an have placed nature, and men side by side, they, too, believe that nature is a mirror of God, .and His beauty

:Shabestari, in his poetic masterpiece, speaks of humanity in this regard

In the name of Him who taught life the skill of thought, and illuminated it with the" ,light of the heart

By His grace both worlds were brightened, and by His favor Adam's earth was a "garden

:And he goes on to say

".For him whose life appears with glory, the whole world is the book of God almighty"

If we place the Holy Qur'an on one side, and Gnosticism on the other, and pay attention to the Holy Qur'an's regard for nature, we realize that it pays more .attention to nature without denying its attention to the self, and mind in any form

Thus, the perfect man of the Holy Qur'an, besides his inclination to intellect, and heart, has an inclination to nature. Another question is that of self-renunciation. Gnosticism respects the heart, but scorns "the self", and believes in its abandonment. This, in itself, is right, and Islam accepts it. But, there are two types of

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self" in Islam, one of which is negated, and the other is revived by Islam. This is like a" friend, and an enemy placed side by side while our target is the enemy in which case we must aim very carefully not to mistakenly hit the friend. That self which is to be crushed is meanness and vileness, and the other self, which must be preserved, is the .source of all human values

The miracle of Islam lies in the fact that these two selves are so exactly distinguished that there is no room for error. In Gnosticism, there is sometimes a distinction

between the two, but, more often the friend is shot instead of the enemy, that is, instead of killing that vile self, the man and his heart are killed. Such an attitude, on account of the sweetness of the language of literature and its wider influence among people, has had a deep effect on the destiny of our society, and a perfect man, for most people, is the figure introduced by Gnostics. Therefore, a further explanation is .necessary to illustrate this subject

An important issue in the Gnostic school, in connection with a perfect man, is the relation of man with his "self", a problem that is Islamic in nature. Both the Gnostics, and the Sufis as well as Islamic teachers are in favor of combating selfishness, and carnal desires. But, the fact is that this jihad against "the self" is an Islamic view which .they adopted

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Sa'di says "You are a fellow-lodger of your own enemy, why do you bother about "fighting strangers

This idea is also found in the utterance of the holy Prophet, saying: "Your most dangerous enemy is your own "self", who is between your two sides. In his "Golestan", Sa'di speaks of a mystic who was asked the meaning of the above utterance of the Prophet, and he answered: "If you treat an enemy kindly, and offer him what he desires, he will become a friend; but, the more kindly you treat "the self", .the greater will be its malevolence towards you." And, this self is selfishness

One kind and degree of selfishness is to make oneself the axis of everything (narcissistic), and perform all acts for oneself, for one's livelihood, one's clothing, and the dwelling. To this extent, this selfishness is vice, or sickness, and not an appreciable .value

The Holy Qur'an believes in man's position to be higher than that of an animal, and in a way of the same level, and still in another below that of an animal. Therefore, there :are three types of human acts

,Moral- above animal level (١

.Immoral- at the level of animals (٢

.Amoral- below animal level (٣

If someone thinks only of himself, like an animal, or, a bird, this is neither moral, nor, immoral. But, sometimes in thinking of oneself, one catches a mental disease, and his .humanity is placed at the service of his animal nature, probably leading to suicide

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Greed is such a disease which knows no limit, even when there is the possibility of expressing benevolence and generosity, one is inclined to meanness and stinginess :which is another disease in itself. The Holy Qur'an says

Whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the......" .(successful ones." (Sura al-Hashr, ۵۹:۶

In such a case only his mental sickness rules over him, not his intellect, thought and resolution. For, if his intellect ruled over him, he would know how to spend according to his true interest, pleasure and happiness, lie. But, his niggardliness hinders him, and lowers him below the animal level to make his conduct amoral, and these are not the only diseases that afflict a human being. There are many more complicated ones which are called complexes, such as envy, where one forgets to seek one's own .happiness; but, only longs for the misery and misfortune of others

His own joy and happiness are for him trifling when compared with his desire for the unhappiness of others. Such a state does not exist in any other animal except man. Pride is another disease which develops in a person in such a way that he himself is not aware of it. Sometimes the self deceives someone in a very strange way. As the :Holy Qur'an says

He said: Nay, your souls have made a matter light for you, so patience is good; may" be Allah will bring them all together to me; surely He is the

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.(Knowing, the wise:' (Sura Yusuf, ۱۲: ۸۳

Delusion is a very subtle psychological point which is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, showing that one may be deceived by one's own self, by adorning that false desire in .such a way that one believes it to be the genuine thing

Today, psychology has derived very delicate, and minute conclusions in this respect to show that man sometimes goes mad without any bodily, or, nervous defect but only by some internal upheaval of the mind caused in turn by some great suffering, In such a case, one says farewell to one's intellect in order to relieve one's great sorrow. So, a poet says: "Every sober one in the world has a sorrow. Then, go mad, O heart, for, it is ':a wonderful state

This self-deception is an important psychological problem. And, it is surprising that a thousand years ago such problems were seldom analysed, the problems which are, in this century, subjects of careful study. Even though the Holy Qur’an is the source of all the knowledge. Sometimes, certain vices so penetrate the human mind that the person himself is unaware of them, and only under certain conditions, these vices rise from the depth to reveal themselves to their owner, who is greatly amazed at having possessed them at all. Sometimes a person is sure of having a clear heart without envy, and rancour towards anyone; then, suddenly he finds himself in the clutches of .these vices

Rumi, compares this to a snake

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frozen in the winter, with no movement, and no apparent sign of being dangerous, so that a child may play with it, and when it thaws under the sun, its true nature suddenly reveals itself. He gives another example of these hidden, and dormant inclinations in :the following poem

Desires are like sleeping dogs, possessing both inherent good, and evil. When there"

is no power they are dormant, looking like pieces of lifeless wood. But the moment a carrion is seen there, the call of greed awakens, just like when a donkey is found dead in that street, hundreds of sleeping dogs will become awaken. The greed which had so far hidden itself, rushes out galloping at full speed, as if every hair of the dog turns into a tooth, and the tail wagging in cunning adeptly. In this body of ours are sleeping ".a hundred such dogs, and they are dormant for lack of prey

So far, these matters are true, and are supported by the Holy Qur'an saying that they :must be fought against. The following verses refer to these points

Then as for him who is inordinate, and prefers the life of this world, then surely the" hell, that is the abode. And as for him who fears to stand in the presence of his Lord and forbids the soul from low desires, then surely the garden - that is the abode. (Sura ;(an-Nazi'at, ۷۹: ۳۷- ۴۱

Have you then considered him who takes his low desire for"

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;(his God" (Sura al-Jathiya, ۴۵:۲۳

And I do not declare myself free, most surely (man's) self is wont to command (him" .(to do) evil."(Sura Yusuf", ۱۲: ۵۳

This is what Yusuf says meaning that he cannot trust "the self", and its desires. It is the quality of a believer not to rely on this "self" lest it would be inclined to evil and .wickedness

Islam emphasizes combat (jihad) against self. A number of the Prophet's companions, upon returning from battle, went in a group to him, and he said to them: "Praised be those who have returned from the lesser Jihad, but their greater Jihad is still to come," They asked what the greater jihad was, and he answered: "Jihad against the (self."(۱

In the Gnostic school of thought, this greater jihad with the self reaches a point which

is not acceptable to Islam, one of whose stages is rigorous self-mortification. Islam attributes a right to one's body, and the Prophet strongly opposes those who give themselves such severe physical discipline. The combat with the self (Jihad al-nafs) is :of two kinds

.Mortifying the body rigorously by giving it little food and sleep (١

.Combating the mind and spirit by acting contrary to its wishes (٢

This may be right to some extent, but there are matters which do not correspond with Islam, and with the idea of a perfect man. One example of this is the way adopted by some Sufis, called "the reproaching way", which is the opposite of the

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. Wasail al-Shiah Vol.١١, p. ١٢٢ -١

hypocritical way. A hypocrite has an evil mind, but, pretends to be good, whereas a reproachful one is a good person, but conceals in order to not flaunt so that the .people would not consider him good

He said: "I act thus to kill "the self" which desires to win honour and popularity", Islam rejects this view, and action, and says: "A believer has no right to dishonour, and disgrace himself". It [He says? Or it??] says: "If you are not good, do not pretend to be good, nor resort to a false pretence of wickedness, for, both conduct are false". The reason for employing the language of debauchery, and dissoluteness in Gnostic literature is this same pretence to wickedness. We see many examples of this in the :poems of Hafiz, the poet, even though he says

O heart, let me guide you towards salvation, Show no pride in debauchery, nor" ".pretend to be devout

Anyhow, the way of reproaching oneself is a type of Sufi combat with the self, which is unacceptable in Islam. There are, of course, other Sufis, like Khaja Abd'ul-lah Ansari, .who are not followers of this way

Sometimes in the Sufi school of thought, this self-jihad leads to meanness, in order to tame, and to make abject that self, which is left undefended where its honour should be protected. Sometimes, the follower, in serving the leader, is forced to perform very humble tasks, which are below human dignity, such as gathering animal excrement, .or, etc

Ibn Abul-Hadid

quotes Ibrahim Adham, who was one of the Gnostic elders, as saying that he had :never felt such joy as on the following three occasions

I was ill in a mosque, and I could not rise. The pontiff came, and forced everyone to (۱ get up, but as I was unable to do so, he got hold of my leg, and dragged me like a .corpse, and threw me out. I felt very happy on seeing the self so miserably humbled

We were on a ship where a clown was amusing people with his tricks, and (۲ entertaining people. He began telling a story about pulling the beard of a pagan, and looking around him he noticed me. He came forward, and pulling my beard, said: "Like .this!" Everyone laughed and I felt joyful that he had humbled this self of mine

It was winter, and I came out of a lodge, and looking at my pelisse I found it so full (۳ of lice that I could hardly see the fur in it, I felt happy to be able to bear this, and .humiliate the self

Another Sufi says: "I was invited to a house one evening to break the fast in the month of Ramadhan. When I knocked, the host did not let me in. I was invited once more, and again the host refused me admission. This was repeated, and at last, the would-be host said: "What an amazing fellow you are. I have refused you admission so

many times, and yet you keep on coming." The Sufi said: "Yes, a dog behaves in the

"!same way

Islam does not permit such insults to one's personality. Thus, there are two things to be considered in self-discipline according to Islam: self-mortification to a degree, and self-respect to another degree. The self may thus have a sublime side, and a low side, .and the latter must be checked when it goes to excess

Philosophers think that the ego of a person is his spirit, and psychoanalysts believe that the ego has a conscious aspect, and an subconscious aspect, which form the main part of the ego. Psychoanalysts have explicitly contradicted the philosophers' idea that the ego is the spirit. They say that the real ego is much deeper than that, and :the real ego discovers itself only when it discovers God. The Holy Qur’an says

And be not like those who forsook Allah, So the lie made them forsake their own" .(souls these it is that are the transgressors." (Sura al-Hashr, ۵۹:۱۹

Mohyedin Arabi, who is the father of Islamic Gnosticism, and many Gnostics, both Iranians and Arabs, are his pupils, severely scorns philosophers like Avicenna. The :Holy Qur’an says

Say: The losers surely are those who shall have lost themselves..." (Sura az-Zumar," .(۳۹:۱۵

The spirit of devotion, and the reality of devotion, which is to pay attention to God, is to discover one’s true self. At the same time, we find little of this belief in Gnosticism that it is through self-respect

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and on its basis that a man attains high ranks. In this way they have received little :inspiration from Islamic teachings. The Holy Qur’an says

And to Allah belongs the might and to His Apostle and to the believers..." (Sura al-..." .(Munafiqun, ۶۳:۸

The Prophet has said: "۱f you are in need, do not beg for help in abjectness to anyone,

."expect with self-respect

(Imam 'Ali says: "It is death to be vanquished in life, and it is life to die victoriously."(١)

Imam Husayn says(٢): "It is better to die in honour than to live in abjection." He said: "Ibn-Ziad, this ignoble son of an ignoble man has asked me to choose between abjectness, and the sword. How can we submit to abjectness? Neither God, nor, the Prophet, nor believers permit us to do so. Virtuous parents have brought us up. I shall ".never offer my hand of abjectness to you, and not act like slaves, nor, submit

Another school of thought is the school of power in which perfection is the equivalent of ability, and defect is equal to weakness. Even the good, and the bad are measured .by the same criterion, namely power meaning good, and inability meaning bad

The German philosopher, Nietzche, went mad at the end of his life, but in my opinion he showed signs of madness even from the beginning. He introduced the principle of power in ethics. There were two philosophers before him, namely the French: René Descartes, and the English: Francis Bacon, both of

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.Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon ۵١ -١

.Life of Imam Husayn", Vol I, p.١٨٣١ -٢

whom offered views about science which overhauled previous theories, and led to a great progress in the sciences, and the theory on human domination over nature, .however, at the same time, caused human corruption

Before these two philosophers, religion and philosophy, used science in the service of truth, not in the service of power, and for this reason, science possessed some sanctity above human interests, and material things. Knowledge was generally compared with wealth, and given superiority over wealth. This is what Imam 'Ali says in Nahjul Balagha. A teacher had a sacred rank, and Imam 'Ali said: "He who teaches (me a word makes me his servant."(١

:The Holy Qur’an says

.(We said to the angels: Make obeisance to Adam….." (Sura al-Baqara, ۲:۳۴"

And, the reason given was that Adam knew what the angels did not, thus showing the sanctity of knowledge. Bacon’s view was that knowledge is not an amusement, but should serve mankind and enable him to dominate nature. Thus, the heavenly nature of knowledge was turned into an earthly one, and the course of research was changed into that of discovery of the secrets of nature, in order to provide man with .privileges

In one respect, this attitude rendered a great service to mankind, but at the same time knowledge lost its sanctity. The students of theological colleges, who pursue their studies on the old system of education, observe certain rites in connection with attending religious classes which show that the sanctity, and exalted position of knowledge is still

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.Sobhi Saleh Version, Sermon ۱۴۷, p. ۴۹۵ -۱

.important, and a pupil feels deep respect for his teacher

For them, studying is not for securing wealth, and a teacher considers it below his .dignity to turn himself into a wage earner

But, in modern education which is the continuation of Bacon's views, and those who preach the same ideas, studying is a preliminary step for living under its specific system, that is, to equip oneself as an engineer, or, merchant, or, even a teacher etc. to gain as much money as possible for a comfortable life. Such students are even .inclined to abuse their professors behind their backs

Following Bacon's idea that knowledge means power, everything became a pursuit for power, and in the service of the powerful. Learned men, and the scientists are the slaves of others, whether it is the imperialist, or, the socialist camp, it makes no

difference. The world is managed by power, not by science, and scientists. Every invention, and discovery is placed at the service of force, first for wicked purposes, and if there are of no use militarily, such types of knowledge are employed for other .services

The way followed by Bacon was bound to end into what Nietzche declared, and what Machiavelli believed, to which was added Darwin’s theory. Darwin himself was said to be a devout Christian, and it is alleged that on his deathbed he held the Bible tightly to his chest, and his confessions show his faith in God, and Jesus. But, others misused his views in

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.a way contrary to his own wishes

Materialists used the evolutionary theory of Darwin to deny the existence of God. Darwin’s philosophy was also misused in ethics. He had offered four principles: firstly love of self which prompted every living being to make an effort for preserving itself. Secondly, survival which made every being combat with others as a result of which .the strongest alone survived

This principle has been refuted for several reasons, one of which is that many of the living creatures, which have survived, do not possess the strength, and competence for survival. Nietzche did not only follow this theory of the survival of the fittest, but he also added that it is right that they should survive, and said that nature’s course is directed towards producing superman, and for him this is the perfect man, meaning a .being without any weakness

For him, affection, benevolence, and service are not morality, but these that have caused disasters, and hindered man's evolution towards becoming superman. He is wholly opposed to Socrates, and Christ, for, Socrates has supported virtue, kindness and justice, and Christ has gone even further, and preached love, and charity. These .are, according to him, weaknesses, which hinder man's perfection

Furuqi in his book "The Course of Philosophy in Europe" says: "All learned men in the world have considered selfishness as malicious, whereas compassion as laudable, but, Nietzche thinks selfishness is strength, and compassion, a weakness and defect. He has agreed with Schopenhauer that the universal principle

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is the desire for existence, but he has opposed the view that this is wrong. He says this desire for existence is good, and right, and this desire means desire for power. Nietzche has purported Darwin's theory of survival as a struggle, and whatever has been refuted in Darwin's theory by critics, he has approved and said this struggle is necessary for gaining power. All the philanthropists in the world have considered as an obligation the regard for the state of affairs of the majority, and have based world's affairs on public well-being. Nietzche, on the other hand, scorns the majority, and gives priority to a selected few, or, the minority. He thinks the more power a .person has, the happier he will be, and the greater his benefits to his desires

Some say it would have been better not to have been born at all, but man thinks: Now that he is born, he must get as much out of the world as he can, even if it is by means of cruelty, deceit, and conflict. Everything which opposes this goal such as truth, kindness, and virtue, is bad. Nietzsche’s writings are intended partly to destroy the moral principles of the past, and partly to substitute what he considers as desirable, and laudable for them. He thinks it unfeasible to suppose all people, and nations become equal in their rights, for such a view is contrary to human progress. There should always exist two groups: superiors, and inferiors, and

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honour and privilege belong to superiors who are the ultimate goal of existence, while inferiors are used as tools, and means by the superiors for attaining their selfish aims. Human progress depends on superiors who are few in number, and the majority is at their service. Society and civilization are formed for that noble group, contrary to what is supposed that the superiors are at the service of inferiors. Superiors must be nourished in order to become supermen, and rise to the epitome of progress. The

(Inferiors are like quadrupeds that must carry load for the superiors.(1)

:This attitude is quite the reverse of what Sa'di, the poet, says

",The sheep are not for the shepherd, rather, the shepherd is meant to serve them"

Western men of learning have a theory of racial improvement which is developed by Alexis Karl in his book: "Man, an Unknown Creature", where he says that the weak should not be given the right of reproduction.

According to Nietzsche, the moral principles observed hitherto have been framed in the interests of the majority, namely inferiors, and these principles must give way to those which favour the superiors. Goodness, honesty, and beauty are not genuine and real values. What is real is that everyone desires power. He believes that religions have betrayed humanity since they have preached justice and protection of the weak. When there was no religion, and the law of the jungle reigned supreme, it was much better, as the strong destroyed the weak.

The world

١- Course of Philosophy in Europe, Part ٣, pg ١٩٨.

was, at first, in favour of the strong, and the weak were considered their slaves. But, the former were in the minority, the latter resorted to the trick of propagating the idea of benevolence, kindness, modesty, justice etc. as something good, and beautiful in order to make the weak appreciate the power of the strong, and be liberated from them; thus, religion was used as a means of attaining their goal. But, this is quite opposed to what Karl Marx believes. He says religion was invented by the strong against the weak, whereas Nietzsche says that it was invented by the weak.

According to the former, Christian ethics are the fundamentals of servitude, which has ruined the ethics of lordship. The talk of brotherhood and equality, love and peace, and observance of the rights of women and workers which have become prevalent

today, originated from that source, and are all elusive as implied, and the cause of poverty, weakness, and decadence. These must be replaced by the principles of lordly life. The thought of God and the hereafter must be abandoned, and kindness and .sympathy must be put aside

Kindness means weakness, and humility, and obedience mean baseness, and patience, and forgiveness show lack of resolution. Manliness is the thing to adopt, since the goal is to become a superman, who is above the good, and the bad, and a .man of willpower

In Europe, there have appeared many such schools, but fortunately we have been free from them. The

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Charter of Human Rights, which is issued by them, is meant only to deceive others. The true European ethics are the Machiavellian and Nietzchean ones. The act of .colonization in the world is based on these ideas

When we are influenced by such thoughts, we are led astray, Are the misdeeds of America in Vietnam anything but the practice of Nietzche's philosophy? Almost all of .their writers follow the same theory, and only very exceptional ones think otherwise

Nietzche says: Why should one kill the self? The self should be nourished. Why should one love others? One should love oneself. Let the weak alone be destroyed, and diminish the pains of this world. A superman is strong, so does everything in power to fulfil his selfish desires, similar to a lord, or, master who removes every obstacle in his way, and fears no danger and war. He then turns to women, and says: It is futile to talk of the equality of man, and woman, or, the observance of women's rights. The main thing is a man, who is a fighter, and a woman is for his amusement, and for .bearing children. This is for them the criterion of a perfect man

At the opposite pole is a school which favours weakness, and considers goodness in being weak. Christianity belongs to such a school which preaches about turning the

.other cheek after one side of it is slapped

What does Islam preach, power, or, weakness, or, neither? In one sense it

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favours power, not of the type of Nietzsche, but a power that is the source of exalted human qualities, from which comes kindness, pity, compassion, and charity. In this sense, the Holy Qur'an speaks so much of power that no other religion emphasizes it .to its adherents

Will Dormant, in the first volume of his History of Civilization, speaking of Islamic civilization, says: "No religion has invited people to strength and power like Islam has ."

:The Holy Qur'an says

.(O Yahya! Take hold of the Book with strength....' (Sura Maryam, ۱۹: ۱۲"

:Elsewhere, speaking of the strength of believers, it says

And how many a prophet has fought with whom were many worshippers of the Lord;" .(so they did not become weak-hearted." (Sura 'Ali-Imran, ۳:۱۴۶

:In another place, the Holy Qur'an says

Surely Allah loves those who fight in His way in ranks as if they were a firm and" .(compact wall," (Sura as-Saff, ۶۱: ۴

:And also it says

and those with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate..." .(among themselves..." (Sura al-Fath, ۴۸: ۲۹

Islam approves of having power to the extent of allowing no one to oppress another. :The Holy Qur'an says in connection with fighting an enemy

And prepare against them what force you can and horses tied at the frontier, to" .(frighten thereby the enemy of Allah and your enemy." (Sura al-Anfal", ٨: ۶٠

:And again

And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the" limits. Surely Allah

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.(does not love those who exceed the limits" (Sura al-Baqara, ٢:١٩٠

Thus, it is recommended that if the enemy puts down his weapon and surrenders, fighting should cease against the foe. There should be no aggression against women and old men, and children, or, those who have left the battlefield. There are also traditions beside the Verses of the Holy Qur'an. For example, the Prophet says: "Two things are unworthy in a believer: to be avaricious, and to be cowardly." In his prayer, the Prophet said: "O God, I take refuge unto you against two things: avarice and cowardice," Imam 'Ali says: "A believer's spirit is firmer and stronger than grind- (stone."(١

Imam as-Sadiq says in Safinat-ul-Bihar": "God has given a believer the choice in everything except one aspect, and that is, to make himself abject. A believer is always dear, and higher than a mountain, for, a mountain can be hewed with a pickaxe, but a believer's spirit cannot in any way be cut into pieces',' Imam Baqir says(٢): "God has :given a believer three gifts

.Respect in this world and the hereafter (١

:Salvation in both worlds (٢

.Fear in the heart of oppressors (٣

There are also traditions about sense of honour, The Prophet has said: 'Abraham had '.a sense of honour, but God's is the greatest

Mussolini, the Italian dictator, once said; "He who has iron, has bread." (By iron meaning weapon and strength.) Iqbal Lahori changed the above remark into the ",following: "He who is iron, has bread

Imam ‘Ali

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.Nahjul Balagha", wisdom ٣٣٣' -١
.Al-Mawaez, p. ١٠٣ -٢

says: "One can never win his right except by endeavour, and an abject person can (never check oppression except by effort."(١)

Westerners say: "A right must be secured", But the question is whether it must be secured, or, must be granted." Christianity is based on giving a right, and there is no need to rise in order to secure it, Islam says that it is both securable, and grantable. He who has usurped a right must prepare to give it back, and he, whose right has .been usurped, too, must rise to recover it

Imam ‘Ali (as) in "Nahjul-Balagha" in his letter to Malik Al-Ashtar quotes the Prophet as saying: "No people rise to the level of sanctity unless the weak stand up against the .strong without a stammer"(٢) . No society is Islamic unless it rises to secure its right

The Prophet possessed both physical and spiritual strength. In the book "Muhammad, :a Prophet to know Afresh", two points are clearly explained

The prophet was placed in a situation politically, and socially, which he had no hope (١ from any quarter, but, he never despaired, and always stood steadfast. His spiritual strength during those twenty-three years was astounding. Hassan ibn Sabet, an Arab poet, says of him in a poem: "He has many aspirations the greatest of which has no ".limit, and the smallest is greater than the world

Physically, the Prophet was strong, and very brave, so much so that Imam ‘Ali says: (٢ ,"In difficult conditions

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.Nahjul-Balagha, Sermons ۲۷ and ۲۹ -۱

.Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon ۲۹ -۲

we all sought his protection". He always lauded strength, and courage, and thus these qualities stand side by side with other human values in Islam. Nietzche has taken only one value, namely power, and strength, as the criterion of perfection, and other values are disregarded, while in Islam many values are collectively the sign of human perfection. In the Nietzche school of thought, the power is the equivalent of right, and .justice, and weakness is wrong and means defeat

There are two errors in the philosophy of that school; firstly, it ignores all human values, but one. In the case of God, might and strength are not His only attributes; there are many others to show His perfection. The second error is in the definition of power itself, and that is, only one type of power which is animal strength, either a physical one, or, his carnal desires, to satisfy which one should suppose that one can .oppress others by making use of his strength

There is a story narrated about the Prophet in this connection. He was passing through a street in Medina where a number of youths were competing in lifting a heavy stone. The Prophet offered to act as referee, and they agreed. Then, the Prophet said there is no need to lift the stone to see who is stronger; he who is .attracted by a desire to commit a sin, but resists it, is the strongest

,Here, the Prophet is speaking about the power of resolution

and that is different from physical power, which is common between man and animals. In Islamic ethics, and Gnostic literature, this resolution is considered as a :power above physical strength, which conquers carnal desires. Sadi says in a poem

Bring sweetness to another mouth when you can, It is not manliness to deal a blow"

".on another's mouth

:Rumi says

Who is a man at the time of wrath and passion? I am looking for such a man in every" "street

To be able to control oneself, in anger and lust, is a power. Of course, sometimes what is really weakness is mistaken for power, and that is why moralists say that .sentiments must be combined with wisdom and faith, in order to possess value

:Sa'di, speaking about this, says in a poem

".To show pity to a sharp-toothed tiger, is to show cruelty to the sheep"

.Such pity is really doing an injustice to the weak and the oppressed

There is a verse in the Holy Qur'an saying that if a married man commits adultery, his punishment is death, and a married woman committing adultery must be put to death, in the presence of believers. If the feeling of compassion is roused in such a :case among bystanders, the Holy Qur'an says

and let not pity for them detain you in the matter of obedience to Allah..." (Sura an-..." .(Noor, ۲۴:۲

For, in this case high divine and human interests are at stake, and compassion here .means injustice to society

,Today, it is often said that execution is useless

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and inhuman. Their argument is that a criminal should be reformed. Reform is all right, but it should come prior to crime. Many societies lack the power of education, whereas means of corruption are plentiful. If the punishment by death is abolished, the potential criminal who is not reformed, will become most active. He is encouraged

to commit more crime, either to avenge his being ignored, or, hoping to receive the .education, in prison, of which society had deprived him before

Others are against cutting off a thief's hand. But, you can see how numerous are the cases of theft even leading to crimes simply because the punishment for it is too light, .or, even negligible

The pilgrims, who visited Mecca fifty, or, sixty years ago, know how frequent theft was in Saudi Arabia. The caravans did not dare to set off with a number smaller than two thousand, or, without taking armed guards with them; yet, no year passed without some disaster for the pilgrims in being plundered, and killed. The Saudi government took the step of cutting off a few robbers' hands, and all the robbery, and stealing came to an end suddenly. Now you find the belongings of pilgrims left .uncared for here and there, and no one dares touch them

So, we realize that the school of might has neither known other human values, nor, recognized power, or, might itself. Power means assisting others, as Imam 'Ali (as) said to his two sons, Hassan (as) and Husayn

as): "Let your strength be used in aiding the oppressed, and in fighting the) (oppressor."(۱

Rancour, envy, malice, and all these vices have their root in weakness. He who is vengeful, and suffers from sadism is not strong, but very weak. A strong person is .rarely envious, or, vengeful

."A remark is narrated from Imam Husayn saying: "Power removes rancor

This is opposed to the idea that weakness causes rancor. Another sentence is quoted from Imam 'Ali about slanderer, which is noteworthy. He was asked what kind of people loved slandering, so he answered: "The weak, it is the utmost effort of the weak." A strong person has no need of it. He also attributes adultery to weakness, for, .a person, with a sense of honour, does not resort to it

Islam does not approve of weakness, but, at the same time does not consider strength as the only criterion of perfection. Moreover, strength is of a greater variety, and degree in Islam that is ignored in some other schools of thought. The conclusion is .in favor of society. Sympathy is not weakness, but is benevolence, and charity

Another school of thought, mostly prevalent in India, and to some extent, propagated by Christianity, is the school of love. In this school, man's perfection is in serving people, and loving them. This is at the opposite pole of the school of Nietzsche. Humanitarianism in the West means doing service to human beings, and the word ,"human", as used by our press

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۱- ۴۷ Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon.

means being charitable. Sa'di, our poet, speaks of this in an exaggerated way by :saying

Devotion is nothing but serving people, and not by rosary, prayer carpet, and" ".cassock

.His remark is obviously levelled at the Sufis who know nothing of benevolence

:Others refer to the same idea by saying

".You may drink, or, burn a pulpit, but abstain from hurting people"

In this school, there is only one value, and that is benevolence, and only one vice, and that is to hurt people. The Holy Qur'an recommends benevolence; but, does not :confine perfection to it. It says

Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the" giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion; He admonishes .(you that you may be mindful" (Sura an-Nahl', ۱۶:۹۰

Generosity is a Holy Qur'anic principle, meaning to give priority to others to benefit

from what is yours and you need it yourself. The Holy Qur’an speaks about the Ansar :(Prophet's helpers) who preferred the Emigrants to themselves

and prefer (them) before themselves, though poverty may afflict them...” (Sura al-..." .(Hashr, ۵۹:۹

:and

And they give food out of love for Him to the poor, and the orphan, and the captive." We only feed you for Allah’s sake; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks" .((Sura al-Insan, ۷۶: ۸- ۹

This Verse refers to the time when ‘Ali's children had observed fast, and in the ,evening when the time came to break the fast, an orphan came to their door

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and they offered him the barley bread they had baked, leaving nothing for themselves. This is an example of the self-sacrifice and generosity, which has always .been emphasized in Islam

A nobleman of the pagan tribes came to the Prophet, and he saw him with one of his children on his knees, and kissing and caressing the child.. He said to the Prophet: "I have ten sons, and I have never kissed any of them even once." The Prophet became uneasy, and angrily, and said; "He who has no compassion towards others, will not receive any compassion from God. What can I do for you if God has removed kindness from your heart?" Imam ‘Ali himself is a model of kindness and .commiseration

We stated before that cruelty is in the depth of the Western spirit. This fact is admitted by the Westerners themselves, and they consider indulgence, charity, and affection to be Oriental qualities, even such affections as fatherly, motherly, sisterly, and brotherly ones. That is why Easterners declare the Westerner to be dry, and .without sentiments even though they have apparent system of social justice

A friend narrates that he was ill, and had gone to Austria for treatment. After an operation he was recovering, and sitting with his son in a restaurant, as his son looked after him. A man and a woman were keeping watch on them. As his son passed by them to fetch something, they asked him some questions. When he came back to his

father's table, his father asked him what those two were asking. He said; "I told them you were my father. And, they asked whether it was my duty to serve you. I told them ".that you supported me in order to complete my studies

They came to my friend's table, and talked about their son studying in another country. But, my friend's son found out that they had lied, and they had no son. Those two had agreed thirty years before to live together, on the condition that if they found each other compatible, they would marry. And, they had not bothered to get legally .married after all that time. This is a typical Western attitude

The late Mohagheghi has narrated a story about his visit to Germany. A learned professor used to visit him. He had cancer, and Mohagheghi, and other Muslims often went to see him in the hospital. One day he began complaining of his son, and wife, who after being told that he was suffering from cancer, thought he had no chance of survival, so they said good-bye to their husband and father respectively, and never returned to visit him. One day, the Muslim friends heard that he had died, and they went to attend the funeral ceremony. His son was there that day, but the Muslims found out that he had sold his father's body to the hospital before his death, and now .he had come to receive the money

But, it must be remembered

that not all affections are true in nature; they are rather a kind of selfishness, for affection means forsaking one's own legitimate right in favor of someone else's. Such a person must abstain from transgressing on the rights of others, and respect those

rights, and secure his own right, and use it in favor of another. Gathering wealth by illegal ways and spending some of it for someone else's sake is neither generosity, nor, social benevolence. This is for the sake of winning a good reputation (social .(standing

Another example is to claim hospitality, and to receive people at various times; thereby, force the wife to work like a slave. Imam ‘Ali always co-operated with .Fatimah in household affairs, and was ever fair, and helpful

It is related of the great religious authority, Haj Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi that he never gave orders to anyone. Once he was ill, and his meal was brought, and left near the door. He could not get up to carry it, and at the same time he abstained from calling someone to bring it to him. Some hours after they found the food cold, and in .the same place

A story is told about some companions of the Prophet in the Battle of Mutah, which is truly amazing. A number of the wounded were lying on the ground, and were groaning with thirst. A man carried a pot of water to them. When he offered it to one of them the latter pointed to

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another, and said that he was in greater need of water, and the second man pointed to a third one for water to be taken to him. When the water-carrier approached the third man, he found him dead. So, he returned to the second man, but he, too, was dead, and when he came to the first man he, too, had died. This is self-sacrifice, and .giving priority to others before oneself, is one of the greatest of human values

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About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

:Address of the central office

Isfahan, Abdorazaq St, Haj Mohammad JafarAbadei Alley, Shahid Mohammad HasanTavakkoly Alley, Number plate ١٢٩, first floor

Website: www.ghbook.ir

Email: Info@ghbook.ir

Central office Tel: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹

۰۲۱ ـ Tehran Tel: ۸۸۳۱۸۷۲۲

Commerce and sale: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹

Users' affairs: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹

Introduction of the Center – Ghaemiyeh Digital Library


Center of Computer
Researches
Ghaemiyeh
Isfahan
WWW
For Getting Other Professional Libraries,
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www.Ghaemiyeh.net
www.Ghaemiyeh.org
www.Ghaemiyeh.ir
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0913 2000 109